National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 2 Institutional hearings: “Government Services”
Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire
Calgary, Alberta

PUBLIC

Part 2 Volume 5

Friday June 1, 2018

Panel 3: “Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing”
Nakuset, Montreal Native Women’s Shelter;
Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
(Alberta);
Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra
Family Assault Support Services (Ontario)
II

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MiKenze Jordan
(Representative)

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Julie McGregor (Legal Counsel)

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Joëlle Pastora Sala
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Darrin Blain (Legal Counsel)

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                          Hilda Anderson-Pyrz (Representative)

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak  Jessica Barlow (Legal Counsel)

Native Women’s Association of Canada  Virginia Lomax (Legal Counsel)

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Regina Treaty Status Indian Services, Inc
Erica Beaudin (Representative)

Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police
Katrina Swan (Legal Counsel)

Winnipeg Police Service Kimberly Carswell (Legal Counsel)
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Panel 3: “Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing” (continued)

Chair: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)
Second Chair: Marie-Audrey Girard (Commission Counsel)

Witness: Nakuset, Montreal Native Women’s Shelter
Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Witness: Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Alberta)
Counsel: Darrin Blain for Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society

Witness: Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services (Ontario)
Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson


Hammer Hill Drummers: Craig First Rider, Clarence Wolfleg Jr, Norvin Eagle Speaker & Faron Cody Black Kettle

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg
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--- Upon commencing on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 8:08 a.m.

--- OPENING CEREMONIES

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: -- Speaker family.

If I can say, this is my aunt and my uncle. In Blackfoot country, amongst my people, we have two, three certain families, and amongst each and every one of your nations, you have one or two families that have been outstanding or have travelled far away. I can honestly say that the Eagle Speaker family, as my relatives, they have relatives all over the place. Seattle, Vancouver, Ontario, different places like that, and they’re some of the forthright people that would help with powwows and all of the like.

They’re very, very special to us, and -- but back at home here, Spike and Alvine, they’re what we call in Blackfoot, we call them Iitskinaiksi. They’re -- they’re members of the Horn Society, and it’s a very special society to our people, and so, just like the lamp here, when we make a smudge or when they start to pray, they make your words stronger. And if I can say, Chief Commissioner, when -- when things get going today, when you’re visiting your -- your kids or your family, whatever, outside of these proceedings, you’re a normal person, but when you speak in here, your words become stronger.

I was very impressed yesterday by the
testimony that was getting put forward, and that was something. And so when you call Spike and Alvine and our -- and our Elders here to make your words stronger, that’s what the prayer is about, is because today, your words are stronger. Today, things go down on the docket and go down on the documents that, here, will help us on what we’re trying to achieve. So thank you again for joining us.

But I’ll ask the Elders to have us a prayer and they -- they may stand, but you all, if -- if you stand when you pray, go ahead and stand, but if you don’t stand when you pray, in Blackfoot country, we don’t stand when we pray, so... But this isn’t like the Catholics, so at least I’m not asking any of you to kneel down, so... All right, here we go. (Speaking in Native language).

MR. SPIKE EAGLE SPEAKER, MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK: (Speaking in Native language).

--- OPENING PRAYER

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Hey. Thank you. Touch your heart when the Elders finish praying. That means you have -- you’ve accepted their prayer to your heart. So anyways, I’m not going to tell you any jokes or things like that, but I am going to talk about my brother here. This is Skip, and he’s going to sing a song for you all to start the day. I’ll let him pick the song. But there’s a funny thing
about Skip. He’s actually a Blood Indian. I’m from the Blood Tribe, he’s from Siksika, but he’s actually a Blood Indian.

You see, 200 years ago, when Indians used to visit each other, there was a family that came to Siksika, they had a little boy. His name was Wolf Lake (ph). Anyways, he was about this age, and they spent the fall time in Siksika Nation and little Wolf Lake made a friend with another family in Siksika, so just the way it was in the old days, they said, “We’ll just let them play. We’ll go home. You guys can keep him for the winter.” Anyways, little Wolf Lake ended up getting registered on the band registry in Siksika, and they assumed he was a member of Siksika Nation, but he wasn’t. He was actually a Blood Indian. So I’m going to go sing with my brother, and then we’ll begin.

--- DRUMMING CEREMONY

(APLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Oh. Oh, okay. Oh, we’re taking the break. All right. Madam Commissioner, the floor is yours, so again, enjoy yourself in Calgary and you can go pay off your layaway clothes plans or whatever you planned for today and you’ve got a few minutes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We’ll just take a five-minute break to settle in.

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Five-minute break and
then we’re going to begin. Commissioners, take it easy on the witnesses today, please.

(LAUGHTER)

--- Upon recessing at 8:18 a.m.
--- Upon reconvening at 8:25 a.m.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Chief Commissioner,
Commissioners. I believe that you would like to start this morning.

--- RULING ON MOTION

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you. Good morning. This is our ruling on an oral motion brought by the Director of Criminal Prosecutions for the Province of Quebec.

The motion can be summarized as follows:
The Director seeks to admit into evidence at the hearing this week a document that outlines Victims Services available in the Province of Quebec. This document is not part of an examination or cross-examination of a witness; however, it is tendered at this hearing during cross-examination to form part of our record, as there has not been a witness called who can speak specifically to Victims Services in Quebec this week.

Commission counsel opposes the admission of the document, and the Commission counsel's argument can be summarized as follows: that this is not the appropriate
time and manner in which to tender such evidence. But Commission counsel does not oppose the -- or dispute the relevancy and value of the document's contents.

Parties by way of written submissions say that the document should not be admitted. Others have said that we should be flexible in the interpretation of the legal path and our terms of reference. Other parties have taken no position. And those written submissions will be marked as the next exhibit, Exhibit 52, please.

--- EXHIBIT NO. 52:

Written submissions by all Parties with standing re: Admitting documents into evidence, binder comprising 12 tabs

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: The issue on this motion is whether this is the correct time and place to accept this evidence from the Director of Criminal Prosecutions for the Province of Quebec. Counsel -- all counsel in their submissions have referred us to the following parts of the legal path: specifically Rules 8, 10, 30, and 33. Counsel have also referred to our Terms of Reference, paragraph H, as well as the general interpretation and provisions of our Terms of Reference.

For the record, we interpret all of these provisions in a broad and flexible manner. It is
important, in our view, to remember the purpose of the proceedings this week. We are gathered to hear evidence from witnesses on defined subjects and to receive documents relevant to their testimony.

In the context of these proceedings this week, in our view, it is appropriate to exercise our discretion to not accept the document tendered as an exhibit. However, we do not intend to close the door on the truth. In our opinion, it would be unfair to parties and others to accept documents in an ad hoc fashion. There must be clarity to the process.

We will advise parties and Commission counsel of when and how we will receive documents and relevant information, aside from those documents entered into evidence at hearings, and we shall do so by way of a practice direction within 14 days of today's date.

The motion brought by the director of criminal prosecutions for the Province of Quebec is hereby dismissed.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Chief Commissioner, Commissioners. I just wanted to now formally open us into cross-examination. There are -- there are 14 parties, including Commission counsel, that are seeking to cross-examine witnesses. And just for the record, and for those joining us online or watching today, the panel that
we are actually cross-examining on, it's the third panel that was on shelters, safe houses and transition houses, and we had three witnesses including Nakuset, Sandra Montour and Josie Nepinak.

With that, I would like to call the first party, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, who will be represented by agent Sarah Beamish. You will have 28 minutes on the clock, please.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: All right, good morning. My name is Sarah Beamish, and I'm here acting as agent for Lisa Weber, who is counsel for Institute for Advancement of Aboriginal Women.

Good morning to the Commissioners, to the Elders and to the Blackfoot people who are hosting us on their territory.

Before I get into -- into Ms. Weber's questions, I want to just warn those in the room and those who are watching online that these questions include some quite graphic content about violence against Indigenous women, and so just please be aware of that.

JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: So, Ms. Nepinak, I would like to talk with you more about the manifestation of violence against Indigenous women. And to contextualize
that discussion, I'd like to talk with you about the
horrific case out of Alberta that you mentioned yesterday
involving Cindy Gladue, who bled to death as a result of an
11 centimetre injury to her vagina.

In March 2015, the individual accused of
murdering Ms. Gladue was acquitted following a trial by
jury, and it is the trial process that I want to focus on
today with the few minutes that we have.

So I believe you would have been provided
with a couple of documents, the first one being a decision
of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Do you have --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So I'll direct
your attention to that, and it's March 2015 reasons for
judgment of the Honourable Justice Graesser. Now, I
appreciate that you are not a lawyer, but I put this
document to you not for the purpose of providing any legal
opinion, but as a member of the public, as an Indigenous
woman, and as someone who works closely with female victims
of violence.

So do you recognize this document?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, I do.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Have you had an
opportunity to review it?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, I have.
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So I’d like to mark this as an exhibit by consent.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Now, during the trial -- sorry.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta decision, Regina and Barton 2015 ABQB 159 is the next exhibit, 53, please.

--- EXHIBIT NO. 53:

Reasons for Judgment (on voir dire), R v Barton, 2015 ABQB 159, March 10, 2015, Docket 120294731Q1, Edmonton Registry (13 pages)

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: I think -- good morning to the Commission. I think that it's worth noting that it's not the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, it's a decision, and specifically a voir dire, as to the admissibility of the severed body parts of Ms. Gladue as evidence.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Yes, thank you.

So during the trial, an application was made to tender as evidence Ms. Gladue's preserved pelvis and reproductive organs. The presiding Justice allowed this application, resulting in the presentation of Ms. Gladue's
body tissue in the courtroom, which was apparently a first in Canada's judicial history.

Within this decision, the position of the Crown and the defence are summarized. At paragraph 3 of the decision, Judge Graesser confirms that it was the Crown that sought to introduce Ms. Gladue's pelvis as evidence, and we see at paragraph 7 of the decision that the defence opposed this application and that photographs of Ms. Gladue's injured body parts were available to be considered, and that an expert witness had provided testimony about the nature of the injuries to Ms. Gladue.

I want to draw your attention to the points on page 4 of the decision. So on this page, Justice Graesser writes: (As Read)

The photographs are graphic and unpleasant to view. The tissue is not particularly recognizable as female genitalia because of the manner in which it has been preserved. The presentation using the tissue was very respectful and inoffensive, and the initial shock or revulsion subsided very quickly. The use of portions of a victim's body as evidence at trial is novel.

After his analysis, the judge decided that
Ms. Gladue's actual body parts could be presented as
evidence in this trial.

So, Ms. Nepinak, my questions to you, would
you agree that the effect of introducing Cindy Gladue's
preserved pelvis into the courtroom, the manner in which it
was presented and discussed, dehumanized Ms. Gladue?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Would you agree that
these actions were a violation of basic fundamental
Indigenous beliefs?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: If I were to tell you
that Ms. Gladue's mother was in court when her daughter's
preserved pelvis, including her reproductive organs, were
introduced and that she was not even aware that her
daughter's body parts were going to be presented in court
on the day in the manner that occurred, would you consider
these acts to be manifestations of violence against
Indigenous women?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, extremely, yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: The fact that criminal
law rules of admissibility of evidence allow for this to
have happened, and by implication that it could happen
again now that a precedent has been set, is this also a
manifestation of violence against Indigenous women?
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Certainly, yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: I have also provided another document, do you have that one before you? It's an opinion article published by the Globe and Mail in March 2015 following the Court's decision in this case.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. Can we please mark this article as an exhibit on consent?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: By consent?

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: The Cindy Gladue Case Sends a Chilling Message to Indigenous Women article to the Globe and Mail is Exhibit 54, please.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Thank you.

--- EXHIBIT NO. 54:


MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Ms. Nepinak, are you familiar with this article?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, I am.
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Can you talk about the awareness in your province about this case, including this issue about the introduction of Ms. Gladue's body parts into evidence?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I would have to say that this issue has been paramount in some of the advocacy work that we have done provincially, and the horrific way -- manner in which Ms. Gladue and her family and her children have been violated by the very system.

The courts that are intended to protect her have dehumanized her and have sent a message to -- to Indigenous women, but to all women in general, that who you are as a whole person does not matter, at least in the eyes of -- of this case, where her body parts were cut out to -- in a -- in a paper -- in a paper plate covered with a napkin shown publicly without her family's knowledge or consent is a horrific form of systemic abuse towards women. And if this case goes forward, the precedent, again, no woman is going to be immune to that in Canada. We're all at risk.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. I'd like to just read you a couple lines from this article that's before you: (As Read)

The details of trial indicate how mechanisms within the justice system can
be used to normalize violence against
Indigenous women. The jury has sent a
message that killing an Indigenous woman
is acceptable. How many more deaths
will it take before the system is
compelled to change?

Would you say that these lines from the
opinion piece are reflective of the reaction of women
across Canada --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: -- to the way in which
Ms. Gladue's body parts were presented as evidence?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: I will have just a few
more questions for you, Ms. Nepinak, but I would like to
give a chance to the other witnesses to add their thoughts
about the reaction to this evidence being used in court
this way.

JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously
Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Maybe, Nakuset, you
could go first and then Ms. Montour.

NAKUSET: At Six Nations, we had a strong
reaction to this. The women had gathered in a protest.
I -- I believe it was a complete violation, exploitation of women, of Indigenous women, an exploitation of Ms. Gladue's body, a violation of our sacred -- sacred beliefs around how we are to treat our -- our bodies after deceased. I believe it was a complete violation of our beliefs. There was a very strong reaction.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And, Nakuset, do you have anything you want to add?

**NAKUSET:** It is so disrespectful on so many levels, it's -- it's like I have no words. Like, the system has to be better than this, and I think that the community members, non-Indigenous, also need to step up because, you know, what you had just read, you get a visual of it. And just total disrespect. So I hope that something better comes out of this, and I hope that the people that were involved in this are held accountable.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Nepinak, would you support the following recommendation to the Commissioners: That all provincial and territorial Crown prosecutors and provincial and superior court judges complete mandatory training on the human response to sexual assault victimization, including a component addressing the unique circumstances pertaining to Indigenous victims, with such educational programs to be developed in consultation with the appropriate Indigenous representatives or
agencies?

Ms. Josie Nepinak: Yes.

Ms. Sarah Beamish: Okay. And would you support this recommendation to the Commissioners, that government agencies such as Crown prosecutions in the provinces and territories conduct mandatory reviews of existing processes and procedures with a view to reducing systemic discrimination and prejudicial policies which may violate the rights and beliefs of Indigenous peoples?

Ms. Josie Nepinak: Yes.

Ms. Sarah Beamish: Okay. Ms. Montour, would you also support those recommendations?

Ms. Sandra Montour: Yes.

Ms. Sarah Beamish: And, Nakuset, would you also support those recommendations?

Nakuset: Yes.

Ms. Sarah Beamish: Okay. All right. I will close off the questioning on that -- on that awful story. And I'd like to ask you all another question now. So I'll start with -- with you again, Ms. Nepinak. Are there Indigenous women on your shelter waiting lists who are getting lost in the shuffle and ending up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute this directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

Ms. Josie Nepinak: Could you repeat that,
please? I -- I just didn't hear it quite clearly.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure.

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And sorry, just a note for the audio-visual people. I think we're having a hard time hearing up here.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** I know that Josie and I are having a hard time hearing. So if there's anything that can be done from the technology perspective -- I know we can put our earphones on, but we're just having a hard time hearing compared to yesterday.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Do you want me -- should I speak this close to the microphone?

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** We'll leave it in the good hands of the tech people. Go ahead, Sarah.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. So to ask you again, Josie, are there Indigenous women on your shelter waiting list getting lost in the shuffle and ending up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute this directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. At -- at any given time, we have 32 beds, and of the 32 beds, we have seven bedrooms. So you can imagine some of the bedrooms have five -- five beds. And -- and it depends on the makeup of the family that come into the lodge. If
there's a large family, then that takes up two rooms. And so for the women who are unable to come into the shelter and we have to turn them away or refer them to other -- other agencies, then quite often they make that choice not to go. And, yes, we have heard of instances where they have fallen through the cracks, and that unfortunately, some of them have passed away.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So I'd like to give the other two witnesses also a chance to respond to that same question. Ms. Montour, can you answer that question, as well?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes. That -- I -- I believe that is true. When people come and they're on -- and they're on -- put on a waiting list, they disappear. And I don't know what happens to them. We don't know what happens to them. They could be missing, and they could be murdered. So I believe that that definitely is true.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And Nakuset?

NAKUSET: Yeah, ask the question again?

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Sure. Are there any Indigenous women on your shelter waiting list getting lost in the shuffle and ending up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute this directly to the absence of sufficient funding?
NAKUSET: Okay. So at the Native Women's Shelter, we also have outreach services. So the women that can't get into the shelter can call Jessica, our Iskwe worker, or Tilly (ph), our outreach worker, or David Crane, who works at Cabot Square. He's our outreach worker who works with men and women.

But I think it's two things. I think it's lack of funding and lack of "I don't care" because, you know, Jessica can work with a woman who has been violently raped, kidnapped, and she brings them to the police. And then they tell her, "Well, it's going to take, you know, um, two months before you get processed." Where is she going to be in two months? You can't guarantee she's going to come back in two months. The population that we work with are usually homeless.

And what we are asking for is we want our own Indigenous -- either, like, a liaison officer or someone who works in sex crimes that can -- we can call them immediately. You know what else they do in Montreal? If you get raped, they send you all the way across town. They only have one centre where they'll process it. And the whole system is so -- mmm -- difficult. They don't want to interview the women if they, you know, had something to drink. So they have to wait until she's sober. That could take a while. They won't allow Jessica
to sit with them, but Jessica is a warrior, so she makes
sure that she's there to do it.

It's like the system is made up so that we
fail. And if we don't create our own programs, then
everything will continue. So, yes, lack of funding,
because it took us two years to get money for the Iskweu
project, but also lack of "I really don't care."

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**NAKUSET:** Does that make sense? Lack of "I
don't care."

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So those are all
the questions that I have on behalf of this party. So
I -- we can maybe move on to --

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. And
so -- sorry. We'll stop the time here so it can be
recorded. Just -- Commissioners, so you're aware, the
Independent First Nation which Sarah is counsel for has
23.5 minutes. However, on -- on consent, there's no
objections from any parties in the room that Mr. Darrin
Blain is going to give his 19 minutes, as well, to the
Independent First Nation. And I'm sorry. I just got the
notes, and I haven't done the math yet. So ...

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So I'm just waiting for
the clock to be set. Okay.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, yes. And I was
just --

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- doing quick math.

Sorry. It took me --

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, and,

Ms. Registrar, please confirm I do have the correct time, which would be 32.5 minutes before we start the clock? Yes? So the Independent First Nation -- Nations will have 32.5 minutes. And so the clock will reset.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** 42.5 minutes?

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. 42. I'm sorry. 42.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you. Okay.

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And just before you get going, Ms. Beamish, for the sound people, it's -- I think it's sounding better up here, and I think the problem has been resolved. Thank you.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** All right. So hello again. I'm now representing Independent First Nations, which is a group of 12 --

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** One -- one second.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sorry.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to get to the 30 seconds. You've got an extra 30 seconds.
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Oh, okay. Sure. I'd love my extra 30 seconds. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. All right. So I'm now representing the Independent First Nations in Ontario, and this is a group of 12 unaffiliated Hodinohso:ni and Anishinaabe and Oji-Cree nations. And each of these nations has lost women to violence, most recently, 23-year-old April Carpenter.

So I have many questions for all of you, and for the sake of time, at some points I might direct this question to just one or the other of you, but I think that all of you would have strong answers to any of them. So if you have a really burning point you want to add to someone’s answer, you can feel free to indicate that to me. And for brevity and given the focus of this Inquiry, I will often refer to Indigenous women in these questions, but I encourage you to think also about the other people who use your shelters, in particular two-spirit people. And if there’s something that you feel you need to add, given those thoughts, please do so.

Now, at a few points in my questioning, I -- I might like to refer to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or the UNDRIP, which sets out the minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being of
Indigenous Peoples. Are each of you familiar with the UNDRIP and comfortable with me referring to it?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M’hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**NAKUSET:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So my first question is for Ms. Montour, about the issue of security. You spoke about security risks to shelter staff, and the need for adequate staffing levels at shelters. I’m wondering what other things shelters need to ensure the security of the staff and the people who are using the shelter? And I’m thinking about both equipment-type things, like cameras or fortified doors, and things like training guards, things like that. Can you speak more about -- about what’s necessary to keep people safe in these shelters?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. Definitely a secure infrastructure. An alarm on the door; a buzzer on the door allowing people to come in or, you know, allowing people out; cameras, a secure camera system; staff should also have a panic button, I’ll be wearing a panic button, especially if staff are single staff, which most staff are. They should be wearing their panic buttons. There should definitely be training on, you know, de-escalatizing (ph) high-risk situations. How to do that through talking, and how to de-escalate high-risk cases. There should be
training specific on a lock-zone, how to -- and -- how to -- how to work with individuals who are medicated or perhaps injecting Naloxone if they have to, or using the smelling -- the stuff that you -- through -- put through the nasals.

Definitely training on any kind of -- there should also be, like, a safety -- staff should also have, like, a training, or the policy should be set for really high-risk cases. So how to -- for example, for staff, how to monitor each other when they leave the parking lot. Perhaps, it’s even setting up with your victim services or your police services, eyes-on, or some sort of an alert button that’ll, through satellite, can track the staff.

Sometimes staff get threatened. And so in those situations, like a partner might threaten that staff, the partner that might be -- they know the -- their partner is in the shelter, so they might threaten that staff. So that staff could -- could have that panic button that through satellite, the police could track if -- when this person is going home, things like that.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Safety planning, a lot of safety planning with staff around even going home, and not to let anybody pull you off the road, and where -- and how you’re going to plan if you -- if somebody does. Where are you going to stop? The houses you’re going to stop on
the way home. So really, extensive safety planning with staff.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Right.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** To keep safe.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. It sounds like this can be a dangerous role.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It is a very dangerous role, it can be for sure.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. Would you say that Indigenous shelters typically receive adequate funding to ensure that they can meet all these security needs?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No, they don’t get adequate funding.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you recommend that governments guarantee specific funding for essential security needs at -- at shelters, safehouses, and transitional housing?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I’d also like to ask you about -- about maintenance and operations at shelters -- Indigenous shelters. Would you say that the typical Indigenous shelter space is in a good state of repair, or is it common for such shelters to have unmet
maintenance needs?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** So as you’re asking that question, I think of the ministry funded shelters, and I think of the INAC funded shelters and the AHWS funded shelters. And -- and, I think, amongst our Ontario shelters, we tend to think that the ministry funded shelters are more -- are more secure because there is infrastructure dollars that we can regularly apply for to up -- upkeep our shelters in terms of maintenance and -- and infrastructure. Whereas, with INAC funded shelters, that isn’t there. However, there is programs through Canada Mortgage and Housing, CMHC, that we can apply for. But that is -- I’ve -- I’ve, kind of, heard that that -- that is not as reliable. I guess, that isn’t there as -- as regularly as the ministry infrastructure funding. So I don’t -- it depends on who you get funding for -- from, that, I think, the state of your building, I really do. It’s unfortunate that it’s that way, but it really does depend on who your -- one of your -- primary funding comes from.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So would you recommend that governments ensure equitable, sufficient, and dedicated funding for basic maintenance standards in all Indigenous shelters?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So my next
questions are for Nakuset. And they’re about data. So all -- all three of you yesterday, in your -- in your testimony and materials had talked about shelter staff collecting data and statistics related to the people who use shelters. I think this is a very important function, and I’d like to better understand some of the challenges in this area and how shelters could be better supported.

So, Nakuset, would you agree that high-quality data collection by shelters is important for tracking, understanding, healing, and preventing violence against Indigenous women?

NAKUSET: Yes. At the shelter, when we collect data, there’s probably a, maybe, 12 to 14-page intake that we do. So it’s -- it’s everything. It’s really wholistic. We have a healing plan for each woman to find out how we can best serve them.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. And in your experience, do the shelter staff doing this data-related work, in your shelter and in other shelters that you’re aware of, do they generally have special education or training in data collection and management?

NAKUSET: Well, in Quebec, through Quebec Native Women, there’s a program called the promotion de non-violence, and she coordinates all the Native women’s shelters in Quebec, and I don’t know, maybe eight or nine
years ago, we actually created a tool-kit from every single
shelter on their intakes, on their healing plans. That was,
you know, with the medicine wheel, and that is how
we -- we work together, is to share our own tools. And we
keep it in the office, and then whenever our staff, you
know, a woman comes in with a particular issue, we have a
multitude of papers to refer to, to best help her.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. In your
department, do shelters generally have adequate data
management systems or software to support in this work?

**NAKUSET:** I -- in Quebec, there’s only two
shelters that are off reserve. I know the ones that are on
reserve have less funding. And I don’t know exactly what
their databases are like. I think that if you’re off
shelter [sic], you have better access to different
programming. So money is always an issue.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So it sounds to me, from
your answer, that there’s certainly no -- no guarantee that
shelters would have adequate software and tools for this?

**NAKUSET:** Yeah. It’s -- that’s -- I can only
speak for what I know. And at our shelter, we do have
databases. I’ve been there for 20 years. I think we got a
new system in, probably, five years ago; otherwise, it was
pretty much just paperwork, files, but no computer software.
Now, we can just type in a woman’s name and we have a very
clear picture of how many times she used the shelter in the
last, I think, five to seven years.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I’m glad to hear
that. In your experience, does shelters and shelter staff
have adequate opportunities and means to collaborate with
one another and learn from one another’s experiences with
data collection and management?

**NAKUSET:** No.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you
recommend that -- that governments ensure that shelters
receive -- all shelters receive adequate training, funding,
and tools to support high-quality data collection and
management?

**NAKUSET:** Absolutely. The thing is that,
when a woman comes in and she’s in crisis, you’re wanting to
help her. You’re not necessarily wanting to collect data on
her. So we sort of go with what the presenting issue is,
and then later on, you know, we do the collection of
information, and, you know -- and when we’re full, it gets
rough. So if there is a certain funding where they can
bring someone else in to -- I’d like to say on a quiet day,
but, you know, we’re open 24/7. I’m not exactly sure.
Maybe three o’clock in the morning might be quiet, but I
don’t know how many staff are going to be around. We don’t
-- we always have staff at the shelter, but not the full
staff at three.

So I think that’s also another -- it’s another problem. I understand that we need the data in order to get more funding, that our governments really like to see numbers, but we are more interested in helping and supporting each individual that walks through our doors.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Actually, my next question is about staff, and it’s for you, Ms. Nepinak. Would you say that trauma and burnout are significant issues for Indigenous shelter staff?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. Quite -- quite often, we have staff who -- who have the lived experiences coupled with the education to -- to do the work, and there is a lot of precarious trauma that happens as well. I think with -- with Indigenous staff, we’re all staff that work in the shelter, is we wear our hearts on our sleeve, and -- and so everyone that comes into the healing lodge is -- is considered a family member. And so with that, we -- why -- why we do case management and we do safety planning and -- and we do the referrals and child support, et cetera, et cetera, we -- we -- we embrace that woman wholly and we -- we try to work with her and treat her as one of our family members.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So that is -- there is a high burnout rate?
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And -- and acknowledging that, you know, most shelter staff are there because they -- they love the people and care about the work, would you say that -- that these issues of trauma and burnout nevertheless affect the quality of services that -- that shelters can provide to the people using them?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely. Absolutely does happen, and we see more frequent illnesses, perhaps some depression as well. And quite often, women who work in the shelter are looking after other family members at home as well, so there’s very little time for these women to -- to do their own self-care and their nurturing. And so at our lodge, we have our -- our Elders program is part of our -- part of our program to look after staff as well, where they have access to ceremony and -- and cultural -- cultural healing as well -- as well as an employee assistance program. And I think it’s important for any manager to recognize when staff are burning out and to -- and to pay attention to that and to offer some alternatives to -- to maybe taking a day off, to having them do other duties. That care is so critical.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. And would you say, based on what you know of -- of other shelters, would you say that most Indigenous shelter staff would have adequate
funding to allow them to -- to get supports like counseling, Elder support, ceremony, that kind of thing, or are there major gaps in that area?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** There are some huge gaps in that area, and no, there is not enough funding to do that. These women are our fire-keepers in the community, and so we need to ensure that they are -- that they are healthy emotionally and -- and physically and psychologically because they -- they take on so much of the -- of the -- the trauma that the women are coming in with.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And so would you support a recommendation that funding for those types of services be considered an important part of overall staffing funding in shelters?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. My next question is also about shelter staff, and it’s for you again, Nakuset. So yesterday, you spoke about -- about the problem of many Indigenous shelter staff receiving much lower salaries than -- than shelter staff in -- in non-Indigenous shelters. You don’t need to go into specifics, but can you talk roughly about the -- the -- this sort of difference that we’re talking about here?

**NAKUSET:** I was having a conversation with my clinical co-ordinator and we were talking about how much we
pay our addictions worker, and then we talked about another
addictions centre that paid $25 more.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Per hour?

**NAKUSET:** Yes, they’re shocked. You know, you kind of think you’re in the wrong business, but I love my job and I would never leave it, but it’s crazy how much other people get. If you look at what executive directors make in the city, like, I’m on the bottom. But, you know, again, I don’t do it for the money and I do it because it’s an honour to do the work. However, I think that we need to be -- we, the shelter workers across Canada, the Indigenous ones especially, because of colonization and everything that we’ve been through, that the government should be putting us on a priority list. You know, they talk about reconciliation, and then they don’t give us as much money. They talk about, you know, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and then after, you know, whatever, was it eight years, they cut it. You know, it’s like we just start the healing and then it stops, the funding. So I think that would be a great priority for the government to really support the ones that are doing the work.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So on that note, would you -- would -- was it -- is it fair to say that, within the shelter system, Indigenous shelters tend to employ more Indigenous staff and non-Indigenous -- mainstream shelters
tend to employ more non-Indigenous staff? Just speaking generally.

NAKUSET: You know, we’re probably -- I have, I think, about 24 staff, and I think we’re about half and half, so. I always want to hire Indigenous people, but I also want to invest in those that are excellent at their job, and sometimes we find them that are non-Indigenous. So we’re fine with that, because at the end of the day, if the women are going to get the services that they need. And I know sometimes my non-Indigenous staff come up to me and they’re like, you know, I feel really bad being in this position when it should be given to a non-Indigenous person, and I’m like, okay, quit. No, I’m just kidding.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: But would -- would you say that, I guess, out of all the -- all the Indigenous staff working in the shelter system, mainstream and Indigenous, that most of those Indigenous staff would be working in the Indigenous shelter system? Can you speak to that?

NAKUSET: What? Say that again?

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: So out of all of the Indigenous staff working in the whole shelter system, would you say --

NAKUSET: My shelter system? Or --
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Just the whole shelter system as you know it. Or you can’t speak to this question, or...

NAKUSET: I -- okay. So like I said, in Quebec, there’s, you know, a couple of shelters that I know, there’s about 12 or 14 Aboriginal Native women’s shelters. When they’re on-reserve, they’re always staffed by Indigenous people. I’m off-reserve. I would have to ask Maison Missinak how many non-Indigenous staff they have. I mean, I know the two women in charge are both Indigenous. You know, we’ve been around for, you know, 30 years, we haven’t always been Indigenous, but we want to hire our own people. We just also need to have those that have the -- the proper qualifications.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Yeah. Okay. So I guess, taking -- taking into account your answer that -- that, for the on-reserve Indigenous shelters, those staff would generally be Indigenous employees, would you say that it’s your impression that the -- the pay difference between Indigenous shelter staff and mainstream shelter staff would be an issue of -- would be something that is disproportionately hurting Indigenous staff? If I understand that correctly?

NAKUSET: Yes, thanks. Are you saying the non-Indigenous shelters are getting paid more than the
Indigenous shelters?

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah.

**NAKUSET:** Yeah, yeah.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I know that you -- you can’t give a legal opinion here, but would you say that the pay difference in the shelter system between the Indigenous shelters and the mainstream shelters is one that should be viewed as an issue of potential discrimination against Indigenous people?

**NAKUSET:** Yeah. At the same time, I think it’s pretty much across the board in every position, right? But yeah, when I hear about what other directors are making, I’m always shocked. I’m like, “What?” What? Sorry.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. I mean, I -- we certainly don’t want to give the impression that any shelter staff anywhere are probably getting paid what they deserve but -- but -- okay. Thank you.

So I’d like to move on to talking about child welfare, and I’ll ask my questions to you, Ms. Montour. So you spoke yesterday about the shelter staff’s duty to report child protection concerns as being a major barrier to Indigenous women accessing shelter services, and you described that one unintended consequence of the duty to report is that sometimes women won’t actually seek out the help that they need because they’re scared of a -- of a
Child Services intervention in their lives.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So in your role, would you say that you frequently see the impacts of the child welfare system on Indigenous children and families?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And would you agree that even where there are legitimate protection concerns, intervention by a child welfare agency in the lives of Indigenous families is inherently harmful?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can't say that across the board. I can't say that for -- for all those cases. I can't say that, no.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can say that our hope with those collaboration agreements is that -- that we -- we're working together for the betterment of that family. What happens is child protection, their focus is the child, but the shelter, our focus is the family. So that's why we often bump heads.

But if we follow those collaboration agreements, they are meant to make a smooth transition for the betterment of the family, but often that does not happen.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you say that it's
a mistake to consider the wellbeing of the child as a separate thing from the wellbeing of the child's family?

That these things are related?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I think they're related. It's hard for me to think like that because I'm -- my philosophy on life and just how I was raised, it's about the family. So it's -- that's a different -- to me that's a different way of viewing the family.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So going back to what you had said yesterday about women sometimes not seeking the care that they need because of this risk, would you say that when Indigenous women do not get the help that they need because they're concerned about child welfare intervention, that the duty report -- the duty to report then actually has the perverse effect of putting Indigenous children in the very danger that it's meant to protect them from?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely it can, if she's not -- if she's hesitant to come forward and she chooses just to remain in that -- in that lifestyle because she's afraid of her children being apprehended, definitely.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And you also testified yesterday that you believe the child welfare system needs a lot of work. I believe those are the words that you used?
MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M'hm.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Would you agree that
this work should include a review of these kinds of
unintended harmful effects of the duty to report, and
perhaps appropriate reforms to the relevant legislation to
reduce those effects?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay, thank you. Now, Ms. Montour, I'd like to ask you about something that was in the Needs Assessment Report, and I can't recall what exhibit that was, I'm sorry. It was about language, the topic of Indigenous languages comes up numerous times in that report.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M'hm.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And I'm sure most of us in this room know that a major impact of colonization has been that -- particularly from residential schools, that many Indigenous people do not speak their language and struggle to learn it. Could you briefly explain why your report highlights language learning in the context of healing and violence prevention?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Because most people that come to shelter or to our services are searching. They've been hurt, they've been traumatized, and they're searching for healing. And the language is who we are, so
helping people to overcome -- and perhaps that language was
stolen from them and they weren't given the opportunity
because of colonization and oppression, to -- to learn that
language, and so the language becomes a vehicle for them to
accept who they are as (speaking in Native language) people
or the original people, so the language is part of -- the
language is our identity.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And would you say that
language learning is not only a healing tool for individual
women, but also for families, communities and nations?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So with that in
mind, would you recommend that violence related services
and strategies for Indigenous people include consideration
of language learning and funding for it?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Wholeheartedly, yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. And there was
another thing in the Needs Assessment Report that I also
want to ask you about. At page 29 it discussed some
different elements of cultural practice in shelter
services.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: One of these elements
that was listed there was connection to the land.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M'hm.
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And I'd like to explore a little bit more about why this connection to land is important when we consider shelter services. So would you agree that Indigenous peoples, broadly speaking, have distinctive sacred and reciprocal relationships with their homelands?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes. And I can -- I come back to teaching as Haudenosaunee women, what we do is we -- we save the umbilical cord what our babes are born and we bury that in the land, and we bury that at home, and what that is so our babies don't go too far from us, they stay close to the land. But not to mention, our relatives are in the land, all our -- our -- when people come to us and they talk about not having any relatives and being alone in the world, we point to them the land. We point to them the trees that know them, the medicines that they have. We -- we point to all the relatives that they have in the land according to our teachings, and so -- and I think that's in there also, specifically for the north.

The north have this amazing connection to the land that I absolutely respect from my colleagues that work in the north, and they -- they teach on the land and they have that connection to the land. But I think across the board as the (speaking in Native language) people are the original people, we have that connection to the land,
so it's important.

   It's important to introduce that to our
shelter folks who are coming from a place of trauma, of
loss, of grief that is overwhelming, that we point them to
where they can become stable.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So knowing that
systemic disregard for, and disruption of the relationship
between Indigenous peoples and their homelands has been a
major part of colonization, would you say that the damage
to this people/land relationship has been a major driver of
violence against Indigenous women and children?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. And would you
agree that restoring and strengthening these relationships
between peoples and their homelands is a critical part of
healing Indigenous families, communities and nations?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Now, knowing that there
may be good reason that Indigenous women and children leave
their community and seek crisis services elsewhere, would
that -- knowing that sometimes that might be the right
thing to do, would you agree that when Indigenous women and
children are forced to leave their homelands because they
cannot live safely within their own nation's territories
because there's not -- there are not adequate services
there, that displacement itself is an additional form of violence?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, it is.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Do you recommend that a core guiding principle of policy decision related to crisis services for Indigenous people should be respect for their relationship with their homelands, including through reducing situations where they would be forced to leave those homelands to escape violence?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I have a couple questions for you now about privacy.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yesterday, you had -- you had talked about how sometimes Indigenous women make the choice to go to mainstream shelters rather than Indigenous shelters because they're concerned about confidentiality?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that the decision to go to a mainstream shelter will often for them then represent a trade off whereby they're forced to choose between protecting their privacy and receiving culturally appropriate services?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.
MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Would you agree then that the improvement of shelter services to Indigenous women should have two approaches: One being increasing the number of Indigenous shelters; and the other being improving the cultural appropriateness of the services they're receiving in mainstream shelters?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely, yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. Nakuset, I have a couple questions for you now. Yesterday you talked about some of the issues that -- that homeless Indigenous people encounter, especially with police and being ticketed for various things that they're trying to do just to stay safe and survive, and you talked in particular about their use of the subway system --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: -- to stay at night. Would you recommend that the municipal laws that are the basis for all of these tickets around stuff, that these municipal laws that are essentially penalizing severe poverty and homelessness be reviewed through that lens?

NAKUSET: Yes, and not only, you know, make a recommendation, we actually sent in a letter to -- there's a minister of homelessness in Montreal, Serge Lareault, and we wrote how it's discriminatory, the way that they are ticketing Indigenous people.
Today, on the front cover of the Gazette, there's a picture of an Inuk woman that has $25,000 worth of tickets that she will never be able to pay off, and she is saying I am basically a slave now. I am work -- trying to work this off. It is totally demoralizing. And we keep advocating, you know -- I mean, it was Christopher Curtis that wrote the article, and this is what I'm talking about, good allies, because I'm outraged. Maybe the rest of the people who read this article, our allies, will be outraged, and then maybe they'll start making changes because, honestly, $25,000? How -- basically, she's got to work the rest of her life off.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you maybe recommend, then, that we don't just look forward at preventing this from happening in the future, but we also look back at -- at -- at these penalties that might need to be forgiven?

**NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And that's what we're trying to do. You know what they do in Montreal? Like, honestly, Cabot Square is an area where Indigenous people have always come to because there's really no urban reserve. That's the place they go to. And they get these tickets that say, "You are not allowed to step into Cabot Square." And we had a situation where one of the -- the clients of the shelter that I've known since I walked in
the door, they -- the community had made a mural of three
Inuit women. She was one of them.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm.

**NAKUSET:** She -- she couldn't walk into the
park to see her own mural. She had to go from across the
street and look at it. And that is wrong on so many
levels.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you say that this
is another kind of colonial displacement of Indigenous
people?

**NAKUSET:** Yes. And -- and punishment. This
is the only place that she feels comfortable, and she's not
allowed to. She has to sit across the street and watch her
friends.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So,
Ms. Nepinak, I have a few questions for you now.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** You spoke a few times
yesterday about colonization as the fundamental source of
the violence, the systematic violence, that we see against
Indigenous women and children.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, Article 7 of UNDRIP
also draws a similar -- a similar link. And it says
that -- it draws a link between Indigenous peoples' right
to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty, and
security of the person, and then Indigenous peoples' collective right to live in freedom, peace, and security as distinct peoples. Would you agree that efforts to ending violence against Indigenous women must be grounded in a decolonial approach that aims to free Indigenous peoples from the imposition of foreign cultural, political, legal, economic, and social systems?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. And Article 23 of the UNDRIP talks about that Indigenous peoples has -- have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development, and in particular, they have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing, and other economic and social programs affecting them, and as far as possible, to administer these programs through their own institutions.

So would you agree that -- that the decolonial approach would include ensuring that Indigenous people -- and include women -- exercise increasing control and self-determination with respect to the design, funding, and delivery of programs for their peoples?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And Article 4 of UNDRIP
states that Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right
to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or
self-government in matters that are related to their
internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for
financing these autonomous functions. Would you agree that
the shift to greater self-determination for Indigenous
peoples must be accompanied by a shift to greater
Indigenous control of the funds and resources necessary to
ensure safety, dignity, justice, and wellness for
Indigenous peoples?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I'd
like to ask you about something else that was in the needs
assessment report. There was a reference in that report to
spiritual abuse. Could you briefly explain what that term
means in the context of Indigenous people?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Often what we do at
Ganohkwasra is we -- we ask about spiritual abuse, we
assess that. And we -- and, of course, many people don't
understand what that means. So we talk about any threats
for -- for people to use bad medicine, for example, would
be something that we would consider as spiritual abuse.
Any shaming of any of their belief system, any of their
religious -- so if they go to long house, if they are
supported or if they are shamed, they'll talk about that.
Or if they go to church, if they're supported or shamed by family members or -- so that -- I guess that's what we mean is any -- any threats or fears of people using bad medicine or any -- anything like that on them or -- because sometimes people will actually control people by threatening to use bad medicine on them or their family or their children.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So was it mentioned in the report because this is one reason that Indigenous people sometimes seek shelter services?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in -- in your experience in the field, do mainstream shelters adequately recognize and -- and address this issue of spiritual abuse?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No, they don't.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you say that mainstream shelters are -- are a place where spiritual abuse is ever perpetuated against Indigenous people?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It's possible that could happen, just because they don't understand. But with the -- the shelter standards that we have given -- and many of the mainstream shelters are trying to incorporate the shelter -- Indigenous shelter standards. There is a list there for them to -- even to refer their Indigenous residents to a traditional knowledge holder or an Elder to
help them.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you recommend that more attention, programming, and funding be directed to this issue of spiritual abuse across the shelter system?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And I have another question for you as -- as a woman who belongs to a matriarchal culture. On -- on page 24 of the needs assessment report, it states that one characteristic of Indigenous women who use shelters is patriarchal domination within their home.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Is it fair to say that in the context of Indigenous communities across Canada, patriarchal domination is a widespread impact of colonization?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. It's a -- it's a value that came in that wasn't -- that was the settler's values. It wasn't our values. And through colonization, it was -- it was imposed on our people to the place where four or five generations later, the idea of the matriarchal society is very foreign to many of our people. And so -- which was our traditional ways. So I definitely believe that that has come in as a form of colonization and
is -- is present in many families today, and -- and can be very harmful, in fact.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you say that strategies for reducing violence against Indigenous women must then address patriarchy as a key driver of that violence?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. I would say that, but also as a Hodinöhsö:ni woman -- woman, I would also say that we -- what we need to do is we all need to look at our power, our privilege, and to be aware of how that can be abusive in -- in any way. So I think that whether it's patriarchal or -- or again, I talked yesterday about our traditional teachings, about that duality of the good and the bad twin is in everybody. So I think we all need to look at that.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely patriarchal, yes. If it's -- if it's off balance, it definitely needs to be looked at.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Nakuset, I have a question for you. You spoke yesterday about sometimes being forced to shape your shelter programming in certain ways in order to access funding for them.

**NAKUSET:** M'hm.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And did I understand you
correctly that this sometimes includes compromising with respect to the cultural integrity of your programming? The cultural appropriateness of your programming? I'm thinking of you spoke about -- about Elders not being properly -- properly approached and -- and recognized.

NAKUSET: Yeah. It's a loaded question. I'm just thinking about all the different programs that we have to sort of tweak in order to fit into the right box. And that is an ongoing issue.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. Okay. Now, Article 8 of UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation, and that the state shall provide effective mechanisms for the prevention and redress for any form of forced assimilation or integration. Would you say that the -- these tweaks and sacrifices that you make in your programming in order to access funding are forms of forced assimilation or integration?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And would you recommend that funding models and policies related to services for Indigenous people be systematically reviewed and reformed through an antiracist and decolonial lens?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. So we just have a
couple minutes left. I'd like to ask each of you very, very quickly in a few words if you -- if you have a response to this question. If you could each get enough money to improve one thing about Indigenous shelter services, what might that one thing be?

Do you want to go first, Ms. Nepinak?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I would -- oh, it's hard to prioritize because there's such a high need in -- in every aspect of the issue of violence, but I would probably have to go with the children and -- and increase services and supports for the little ones that are coming into the shelter who are so traumatized and the broken little spirits that come in, because you can often see this in their -- in their eyes, and -- so increase supports for children who are traumatized by violence.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in a sentence or two, Ms. Montour, what might your one thing be?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would ensure that my shelter is no longer single-staffed. I would hire enough so that it -- at least double, maybe triple-staffed at -- during high-crisis times.

**NAKUSET:** Repeat the question again?

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** If you could get enough funding to fix one problem with -- with your Indigenous shelter, what might that one thing be?
NAKUSET: Funding. Give us unlimited money.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Unlimited money.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay. It’s unlimited money. All right.

And now I have one minute left and I’m going to take up the challenge of our MC yesterday to say something about the growing -- Indigenous people as the fastest-growing part of the Canadian population. Would you -- maybe I’ll ask you, Ms. Nepinak. Would you agree that there is a common stereotype among non-Indigenous Canadians that Indigenous communities are a drain on our system, our economic system?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, it’s racism, is what it is, and absolutely, there is. I -- I mean, you just need to look at some of the news headlines across the country and some of the comments that are made that --

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Yeah, we -- yeah.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: -- you know, that -- that we -- we don’t pay our taxes, that we -- all Indigenous women are high-risk, et cetera, et cetera.

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: So there is a common...

MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And so, sorry, with the
last ten seconds, I’m going to ask you, would you say that because Indigenous people are actually the fastest-growing part of the Canadian population, that it is an important and excellent investment to be fixing these problems now?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. It -- we’re -- we’re in a crisis. It needs to be fixed now.

**MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you so much to all of you for your answers today.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. -- thank you, Ms. Beamish. We -- so that we see the -- the third party, through Mr. Darrin Blain had given assigned, we’re now moving to the fourth party, which is Ms. Beth Symes on behalf of Pauktuutit.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Oh, sorry, and actually, before we call that, is it possible to have -- we’ve had a request for a five-minute break, so I’m sorry, Ms. Symes. If we could just have a five-minute break, that would -- thank you. Five minutes.

--- Upon recessing at 9:31 a.m.

--- Upon reconvening at 9:40 a.m.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Please set the time for Pauktuutit and partner organizations for 37 minutes.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Thank you. My name is Beth Symes, and I represent Pauktuutit, Labrador Inuit Women's Association, Saturviit, the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre,
and the Manitoba Inuit Association. And my focus today is on Inuit women and girls.

And I -- I want to explain to you that these questions that I ask, the areas I ask, come out of my client's workshopping the issues -- issues for Inuit women -- women and girls. And I have been invaluably assisted by the contributions of Charlotte Wolfrey and Sarah Nowyakallak who sit on the Family Advisory Committee and are here today and -- and have been helping me, and I share their wisdoms.

I do want to acknowledge and thank you for actually living out your care, your concern, for Indigenous women. You do it every day, and my clients acknowledge that and thank you.

JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:

So I'm going to begin with you, Josie, and ask: Has Awo Taan ever had Inuit in your shelter, in your services?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, we have.

MS. BETH SYMES: And, Sandra, has your shelter -- you're on Six Nations land in Ontario, but also speaking from the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, do you have Inuit women in your shelters?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, we have.
NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:

MS. BETH SYMES: And, of course, Nakuset, I know that you have Inuit women. In fact, there is no Inuit women's shelter in Montreal, is there?

NAKUSET: No. 50 percent of our clientele is Inuit. I know that there are other services like Chez Doris that also partners with Makivik, and they have special funding -- I think PAQ does -- Projets Autochtones du Québec also gets money from them. So I think what happens is other organizations get small bits of money to address or service Inuit people. I believe the Open Door also receives money, and the Native Friendship Centre.

MS. BETH SYMES: So in your service of both Inuit and First Nations women, you'd agree with me that the needs of Inuit women can be different than the needs of First Nations women who come to your shelter?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And that the way that they -- the ideal way to receive the services that they need can also be different?

NAKUSET: Say that again? The ideal way?

MS. BETH SYMES: That the services are delivered to Inuit women can be different than the way services are delivered to First Nations women.
NAKUSET: Yes. I have Irene Qavavauq, who works for me. She is Inuk, and she speaks the language, so we make sure that we have the staff that can speak. I mean, she doesn't have both dialects so sometimes it's limited, but, I mean, it's better than my Inuktitut.

MS. BETH SYMES: And way better than mine. Now, I just want to reference some data from the 2016 census that was, for the record, marked as Exhibit 21 in the first panel in Quebec City. So it's in on the record, and I'm just going to go to it. That census says that in 2016, there were 975 Inuit in Montreal, and that 63 percent of them were women. Does that number seem a little bit low to you?

NAKUSET: Totally low.

MS. BETH SYMES: And would you join with the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre in taking issue with those numbers and concerned that the Inuit in urban centres have been really undercounted, substantially undercounted?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: Now, you've been collecting data -- I'm now going to focus the questions on Montreal because I've got more information about that to ask you. You've been collecting data electronically from five to seven years. Can you tell us, Nakuset, where do the Inuit women come from who come to your shelter? And by that, I
mean, where in Inuit Nunangat do they come from?

NAKUSET: I don't know exactly because, as the executive director, I don't do the intakes. Nunavut and Nunavik is where they come from. And like I said, there is a -- a huge amount of Inuit population in -- in Montreal.

MS. BETH SYMES: Okay. And second question, then. For the women, the Inuit women who come to your shelter, do you track why they come? Just the presenting reasons, and can you tell us about that?

NAKUSET: Well, we always do full intake, so we find out why. But what I have come to see in the last, you know, couple of years that I've been working is that through the northern module, there's not enough health services in -- in the community, so they come to Montreal. And when they come to Montreal, they are just astounded with, you know, the lower prices of everything, the amount of housing, and they choose to stay in the city. But because they don't speak French, because they don't have the education in order to get a job, they fall through the cracks, and they end up at the shelters.

So -- and we're lucky to have, you know, an outreach worker at Cabot Square because he also sees a large population of Inuit there, too. They used to have Nunavik House right on Tupper Street, which is right by
Cabot Square, so that's why there's a -- a large population around that area. Now, it's moved to Dorval. So -- but we still see a large population, so we try to create a lot of services for them. I'm not sure if I answered your question.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** You did.

**NAKUSET:** Okay.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Absolutely. So, Commissioners, you'll remember that in the Montreal hearing, Sarah Nowyakallak and her family told the story about when their -- Sarah's older sister went missing in Montreal, and the family came from -- from Nunavik. And they were -- they were just lost as to how to link into the services that -- that exist, right? Just -- just completely lost how to -- part of it was language.

**NAKUSET:** M'hm.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Part of it was Montreal is, like, many, many times bigger.

**NAKUSET:** M'hm.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And most importantly, the different way of doing things.

**NAKUSET:** M'hm.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Right? And is that -- was Sarah's description of -- of that, just being lost as to how the system works, pretty common amongst Inuit women
NAKUSET: Absolutely. And, unfortunately, working at the Native Women's Shelter I've seen a lot of our Inuit women pass away. The streets, living on them, it just -- it kills them. And we're always hoping that they will come back to the shelter to sort of strengthen them so they can decide where they want to go, if they want to return to the community, if they want to stay here, if we can give them the services, but that's also why we have the Iskweu Project. So, I mean, if you ever see our logo, we have an ulu on it. We want the women to see our poster and to let them know that this is a way to navigate the city, the city will eat you up, so these are the ways and these are the organizations and these are the people that you can call that are Indigenous that will help you.

MS. BETH SYMES: So, Commissioners, this is my first chance to ask questions about urban Inuit women, so that's why I'm focussing on this. Maybe we should all turn to Exhibit 38, that wonderful Housing Needs and Preferences of Indigenous People Using Community Resources in Montreal. If you've got it, maybe we could go through it.

Nakuset, you helped develop the questions for the survey?

NAKUSET: No.
MS. BETH SYMES: Your staff did?

NAKUSET: My -- yes, yes, my --

MS. BETH SYMES: Okay.

NAKUSET: Yeah, my -- I run the committee, but, yes, Tilly, who works through the Native Women's Shelter, was an integral part of this.

MS. BETH SYMES: When I say "you," perhaps I mean sort of like the collective you, all right?

NAKUSET: Okay.

MS. BETH SYMES: I'll give you credit for everything, but you're very honest and generous with your staff. All right. And obviously you've read this report; do you agree with its findings?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: It's your lived reality as well, is it?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And so the study shows that -- it's about homelessness in Montreal amongst Indigenous people?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: And it shows, then, that of the people surveyed, the Inuit women were considerably younger than the Inuit men that were -- that were surveyed?

NAKUSET: M'hm.
MS. BETH SYMES: Inuit -- for women it was, I think, around a median age of 38, whereas for men it was around 45. And I'm just reading off those graphs.

NAKUSET: Okay.

MS. BETH SYMES: Okay. And 11 percent of the Inuit women had been in Montreal for less than two years?

NAKUSET: Okay.

MS. BETH SYMES: But an interesting statistic is that 70 percent of the Inuit women had been in Montreal for five years or more.

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: As you said, they come south maybe for a reason, but they stay --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- the Inuit women stay. And let's talk next about language. Sandra, you said language is identity, it's who we are?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And, Nakuset, would you agree with me, again from the Inuit perspective, it's really important, language is really important to be able to communicate?

NAKUSET: Absolutely, that's why I have staff that speak the language.
MS. BETH SYMES: But I'm thinking about the Inuk woman, right?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: So if she's trying to tell her story --

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- to the Montreal police --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- right?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: It's incredibly important that she's able to communicate what happened, its impact on her, et cetera?

NAKUSET: Yeah. And I would go across the board. Also at youth protection, at hospitals, everywhere. They need to be able to speak their language and they get lost in the communication.

MS. BETH SYMES: And Montreal is a French speaking city predominantly.

NAKUSET: M'hm, yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: Yet I look at this study, Exhibit 38, and I see that 13 percent of the women -- of the Inuit women who were surveyed speak only Inuktitut?

NAKUSET: M'hm.
MS. BETH SYMES: Could you answer yes or no, sorry, it's just --

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- we're trying to create a record.

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: Thank you. And that 66 percent of the Inuit women surveyed speak no French whatsoever?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And it's pretty hard, would you agree with me, it's very hard to communicate your needs, your needs for services, if you speak no French?

NAKUSET: That's right.

MS. BETH SYMES: And would you agree with me that it's really impossible to communicate your needs to the service providers if you speak only Inuktitut?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: Now, in Happy Valley-Goose Bay the Inquiry learned that although an Inuk family might have spoken English, when it came to telling their story about something that was deeply intimate, like sexual violence --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- or horrendous deaths,
et cetera, when they came to that part of the story they
switched to their language?

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: And would you agree with me
that service providers, whether they are police or health
care or addictions services or child welfare services, have
to understand?

NAKUSET: Absolutely.

MS. BETH SYMES: Being able to speak in your
own language is essential to being able to communicate?

NAKUSET: Yeah, they should all have

MS. BETH SYMES: Because I assume that in
Montreal there are few, if any, police speaking Inuktitut?

NAKUSET: There's none.

MS. BETH SYMES: In terms of emergency room
services, in hospitals, any Inuktitut nurses, doctors?

NAKUSET: I'm not sure. I know that the
Crees have Wasaya House, but -- I think that's what it's
called, or Wichia, (ph) I forget the name of it, but it's
at one of the children's hospital, like a special cultural
room, but there's nothing for -- for the Inuit population.

MS. BETH SYMES: And when we go into mental
health services, whether it's for addiction or it's for
seeing a psychiatrist or a psychologist or even a
Nakuset: Until.

Ms. Beth Symes: -- that there are virtually no services in Montreal for Inuktitut?

Nakuset: No. No, I mean we have psychologists that are Mohawk, like Suzy Goodleaf. You know, we have Anike Seewee (ph). We have a couple of First Nations, but none yet that are Inuit. But I believe they're coming.

Ms. Beth Symes: That would be wonderful.

Nakuset: M'hm.

Ms. Beth Symes: And when we look at the statistics from Census Canada, Exhibit 21, Panel 1, Quebec City, in the 2016, 99 percent of people -- of Inuit living in Nunavik speak Inuktitut?

Nakuset: M'hm.

Ms. Beth Symes: 99 percent. And that 89 percent in Nunavut speak Inuktitut? This is -- this is virtually everyone?

Nakuset: Yeah, it's beautiful.

Ms. Beth Symes: And so when they come south, that's still their language?

Nakuset: M'hm.

Ms. Beth Symes: And would you -- you told this wonderful story yesterday too, where you add on
culture to language, the story about the woman who was identified as Cree, and when the -- when the intake person says, but why didn't she tell me --

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- that she was Inuk --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- your staff said because you've got her child?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: And so the cultural and the language intersect in a way such that nuances are lost in the telling of the stories?

NAKUSET: Absolutely. And we also find that with the Inuit men, that when they go to court and they don't look at the judge because it's seen as disrespectful, but then, you know, we are judged as, oh, you must be guilty because you can't even look at us in the eye. So I think that there needs to be training on all levels.

MS. BETH SYMES: And let's go to Exhibit 38 and its findings. On page 1 the researchers say very bluntly that Inuit are overrepresented amongst the homeless in Montreal?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sorry, Ms. Symes, can you -- you said the exhibit name, can you just confirm
the title of that?

MS. BETH SYMES: Housing Needs and Preferences of Indigenous People.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: That's the one I ask everyone to turn up.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

MS. BETH SYMES: I'm going to be using that one. Now, if we go to page 11 of that report.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: The researchers find the following, and I just want to go through with -- them because I think they're so important. That in Montreal the Inuit are isolated by language --

NAKUSET: M'hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- do you agree?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: They are less connected to public services.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: They are more vulnerable?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: The Inuit are poor?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: They’re less likely to live
in their own home?

    NAKUSET: Yeah.

    MS. BETH SYMES: And this is true of comparing them to other Indigenous people?

    NAKUSET: Yeah.

    MS. BETH SYMES: So in Montreal, would you agree with me that it -- Inuit, and in particular Inuit women and girls, are at -- most at risk?

    NAKUSET: Yeah. They are very, very high at risk, and that’s why we have, you know, such a large population at the shelter.

    MS. BETH SYMES: You’ve worked tirelessly with your message about cultural -- cultural competence to service providers.

    NAKUSET: M’hm.

    MS. BETH SYMES: You’ve -- you’ve been, you know, given the back of people’s hand, and you’ve come back for more. I sure want you on my side when I get into trouble, I tell you. You’re a fierce advocate, madam. You -- you have tried this over and over again to try and sell that you must -- that service providers must be culturally competent, really, in order to do their job.

    NAKUSET: Yeah.

    MS. BETH SYMES: Okay. This isn’t a, it would be nice if it is -- you actually can’t provide
services of health, child welfare, et cetera, unless you are
culturally competent.

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: And you spoke yesterday
about your frustration in -- in trying to educate the
police.

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: And you’re Pollyannaish that
this new major is going to make a difference. But there is
a huge gap, isn’t there? A huge gap between provision of
police services and cultural competency?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: And when you’re doing the
cultural competency, I -- I understood, and please correct
me, that it was on behalf of Indigenous people. It was
cultural competency for all -- for all Indigenous people,
not just for First Nations, not just for Inuit; is that
correct?

NAKUSET: I’m sorry, what do you mean? I was
giving the training to non-Indigenous people on Indigenous
people, so First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

MS. BETH SYMES: So -- so my question is, the
course that you gave to non-Indigenous --

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- people --
NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- was cultural competency with respect to First Nations, yes?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: Métis?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And Inuit?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. BETH SYMES: And how long was the training? How many hours?

NAKUSET: Well, you know, we developed a whole bunch of different things. I mean, we had the -- the manual that was put into evidence there. And that -- had they utilized it, it could be as long as they wanted it to be. The training that we actually did was, I think they gave us 2.5 hours. I think we negotiated 4.5 hours. Yeah, they wouldn’t even give us a whole day.

MS. BETH SYMES: I was really taken aback when you said that the police officers laughed during the presentation.

NAKUSET: Yeah. They were very, very disrespectful. I mean, I was there as a helper, and I actually had to walk around the blanket and tell people to stop it. I was policing the police. I’m not very popular with them by the way.
(LAUGHTER)

**MS. BETH SYMES:** That’s not your role in life, to be popular. And when an Inuit -- an Inuk woman goes to the police, right --

**NAKUSET:** M’hm.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- you send a staff with her, right?

**NAKUSET:** Always. They won’t go.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And if they went alone, they wouldn’t get the services that they deserve?

**NAKUSET:** They don’t -- they won’t go alone. They won’t. We have to have long conversations with them, and -- and be by their side. And I remember even Jessica, the Iskweu worker, she had to -- an Inuk woman had to give testimony, and halfway through, she was just so overcome. And Jessica said to the police officer, “Can -- can I just take her outside for a cigarette?” And the police officer was, like, “No, you can’t.” And Jessica really convinced him. So just that break for her to breathe --

**MS. BETH SYMES:** M’hm.

**NAKUSET:** -- to debrief a little bit, and then to go back and finish. Like, because she wouldn’t have done it otherwise. So if we don’t have, you know, these specialized workers to -- to be by their side and to help
them just be treated like human beings, right, it’s not
going to work.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, we’ve talked -- you’ve talked, actually, about police, you’ve talked about physical healthcare --

**NAKUSET:** M’hm.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- you’ve talked about mental healthcare and addiction. So I’m going to skip right to child protection. In Batshaw, is that how you pronounce it?

**NAKUSET:** Batshaw.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** In Batshaw then, for Inuit --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- Inuit women and their children, have they received, to your knowledge, any cultural training for Inuit?

**NAKUSET:** Well, I did training. So we did training on, sort of, like Native 101. And then last year, the network team, so Vicki Balldo and Elizabeth Fast, Catherine Richardson, one of my staff, went in and did another training. So we try and we put a lot of Inuit content in it. So we have to advocate, and we have to be, like, “Here’s the training. You want the training? I bet you’ll like the training. You should really take the
training. You going to take the training yet?” So it’s
almost like stalkers, right, friendly stalkers, but that’s
what you have to do. You have to be relentless.

MS. BETH SYMES: And has anyone told you that
you and the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre have the same
mission and the same drive to try and increase the cultural
competence of child protection workers?

NAKUSET: No. But it’s the best compliment I
ever got.

MS. BETH SYMES: You deserve it. When --
when an Inuk child is apprehended, taken away in Montreal,
is she placed in a on -- a non-Inuit setting?

NAKUSET: She is placed in a non-Inuit
setting. Yeah. It’s -- it’s pretty much the norm, which is
why we try to actively recruit Aboriginal families, Inuit
families. We’ve being doing it for years. I have people
who tell me, “Why are you working with the enemy?” I’m like
-- because I’ll go to these places with Batshaw, and I’m,
like, “If I don’t, we’re not going to change.” But most of
the children are placed with non -- and they separate the
children. If they have siblings, it is -- we just have
horror story after horror story about what happens.

And I just have to say, I’ve seen women,
Inuit women, that have let’s say seven children, they take
the first child, and then when she’s pregnant with the next
one, Youth Protection is at the hospital ready to take that child. And then the third child, and then -- so they don’t even give her a chance to redeem herself. They just assume that she’s going to be a bad mother, which is why I started the collaboration with Batshaw. You know, trying to get them to follow it, it is -- is not as easy. But, you know, at least you -- you got to, kind of, put a step forward. So it’s -- it -- and, you know, one particular mother, you know, she’s -- she’s not with us anymore. It kills them.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And when a child, an -- an Inuk child is taken -- taken away, she’s also taken away from her extended family?

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Her aunties, her uncles --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- or -- because they could well be in Nunavik, right?

**NAKUSET:** Yes.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Or Nunavut, or anywhere else?

**NAKUSET:** Can I just say that there was a particular case where this Inuit boy wanted to see his cousin, and they didn’t allow it. They -- he was, I think, like, six or something, and he was already losing the language. And our case workers were trying to say, “Can we
-- we’d like to put him in Inuit Inuktitut classes.” And they wouldn’t permit it in -- in the -- in the -- in, like, the care or the safety plan for him. They -- they wouldn’t do that. Like, when he returns, he’s not going to be able to speak anymore. You don’t think that’s a priority? “Oh, no. It’s not a priority.” But we have to advocate on every single level. And it’s -- it’s not easy. I mean, my staff is amazing.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And -- and so when the children are placed in -- in a non -- a non-Inuit foster family, they, you’ve said, lost their language, but they also lose their culture, right? There’s no obligation on a foster parent to continue the Inuit cultures and traditions for them?

**NAKUSET:** And not only that, there are biases. I can -- oh, my God. I have heard from colleagues, because there’s the Rising Sun Childcare Centre, sometimes -- there was a mother that came in, so a white foster mother, and she was discussing her child, and they’re, like, “Yeah, well, you know, he’s kind of dirty, but, you know, he’s Inuk, so that makes sense, right?” What? So now, I’m like, all right, so now, anyone who takes an Indigenous child, we got to teach those parents. Like, I said, it’s an honour to have our children. If you’re going to take our children, you need to be fully trained. You need to earn
the right to have our children. They won’t let me do those interviews yet, but I would love to. I would love to be, you know, have a team of us, to be, “You want to take one of our children? Let’s see if you’re qualified.”

MS. BETH SYMES: And then you said the obvious thing, aging out of care. In -- in Quebec, when does a -- a child age out of care?

NAKUSET: At 18.

MS. BETH SYMES: So when a child -- when an Inuk child ages out of care, she’s on her own?

NAKUSET: Yeah, unless she comes to the shelter. Sometimes they come back. You know, sometimes they’re at the shelter as children and then they remember it as a good place, and we’re seeing a lot more of those girls come back.

MS. BETH SYMES: But if she was taken into care as a young child, she would have lost her language, right?

NAKUSET: Sometimes.

MS. BETH SYMES: But it -- do you agree with me it might be very difficult to go back to, let’s say, Nunavut?

NAKUSET: Yes. Yes, for sure.

MS. BETH SYMES: You agree.

NAKUSET: Yes.
MS. BETH SYMES: Any other part of Inuit community?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: And are there any special programs that Montreal offers for Inuit children who are aging out of care?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. BETH SYMES: You were sort of laughing earlier, but --

NAKUSET: No. No.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- in amazement.

NAKUSET: You know, I have way too many ideas. I would love to have the transitional, supportive housing for those that are aging out of this system so they can just be in something that’s culturally appropriate. They can have maybe up to two to three years there. I’m not talking about the transitional house that I’m having for the shelter, that something completely different. This is for, hey, I’ve survived Youth Protection, I want to learn who I am, I want to get the tools that I need so...

Because what happens is, they get out of the system and they go right to the streets. They have the -- you know, there’s a lot of predators, pimps that pick up the girls at a young age and put them into, you know, the sex trade. It’s, you know, we have to protect them, and I’ve
been telling Batshaw for years that we need to do this, but you know, it’s always a money issue and then you have to fill out the forms and I’m a little overextended.

(LAUGHTER)

NAKUSET: But I still have the dream.

MS. BETH SYMES: On page 10 of exhibit 38, it says that more than 72 percent of Inuit women that were surveyed did not wish to return to their own community.

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. BETH SYMES: They’re -- they’re -- the Inuit women you serve are, despite the challenges of homelessness and lack of services, want -- intend to stay in Montreal, and we need to know that, don’t we, for the future?

NAKUSET: Well, yeah, because they may not have -- they may not have housing, they may not -- there might have been a conflict within the family that is not resolved. They came here, if they go back to that conflict, you know. I see the women come and go, and -- and they want to be with their family, but because of the dynamics, it’s not really the best thing to be around their family. So, you know, there’s -- it’s the dream. The dream is to be in Montreal and to have it all, and we don’t see that happening for our women. You know, we end up being a statistic, and I am totally against that.
MS. BETH SYMES: And I notice in sharp contrast that, on the same page of Exhibit 38, that 45 percent of the Inuit men who were surveyed would like to or plan to or dream of returning home. It’s a sharp contrast, do you agree?

NAKUSET: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: And might that be related to why they came to Montreal in the first place?

NAKUSET: I’m not exactly sure if I know the answer to that.

MS. BETH SYMES: And that hasn’t been -- that would be an interesting thing to survey, wouldn’t it?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: The 2016 Census, again, for the record, Exhibit 21, in Quebec City, panel number 1. Census Canada, for -- said in 2016, if you look at the period, the -- the last ten years, 2006 to 2016, the number of Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat grew by 61.9 percent. Does that surprise you?

NAKUSET: Sorry, I can’t wrap my head around that one. Say that again? The number of --

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: If we could just stop the time for a minute? Ms. Symes, I -- I just want to acknowledge that that document hasn’t been put before her, so maybe if you could rephrase the question a
little, like --

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Get me to -- let -- let me
do it in a shorthand way then. Statistics Canada 2016,
records for everyone to see that in the ten-year period,
from 2006 to 2016, the number of Inuit living outside Inuit
Nunangat rose by 61.9 percent.

**NAKUSET:** So you saying when they’re outside
of the community?

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Yes.

**NAKUSET:** Okay.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And that they’re coming to
major urban centres. Ottawa --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- Montreal, Winnipeg --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** -- Edmonton, et cetera.

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Given that statistic, won’t
the number of Inuit women seeking your services increase?

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** Increase dramatically?

**NAKUSET:** Sure.

**MS. BETH SYMES:** And are you equipped in
terms of resources?

**NAKUSET:** I’m trying.
(LAUGHTER)

MS. BETH SYMES: No, but if the number is going up by 61.9, almost 62 percent --

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- if your caseload is rising --

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- let’s -- let’s project forward.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. BETH SYMES: Sixty-two percent increase in Inuit women. Are you equipped --

NAKUSET: No.

MS. BETH SYMES: -- resourced to do this?

NAKUSET: No. We’re coming to you.

MS. BETH SYMES: And are the service providers in Montreal equipped to competently serve, provide services, to these Inuit women and children?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. BETH SYMES: Thank you.

NAKUSET: Thank you.

MS. BETH SYMES: Excuse me. I was taught how to do this and I’d better not blow it. Nukoomeek. It means thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Thank
you. Just with an awareness of the time, I’m asking the Commissioners if I might call one more of the parties that have 19 minutes before we ask for a break. On that basis, I would like to invite the Regina Treaty Status Indian Services up, Ms. Erica Beaudin. Ms. Beaudin will have 19 minutes on the clock. Nineteen minutes on the clock.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Good morning. Oh. Am I good? Hello. Can you hear? Good morning. A final thank you to the Elders, drummers, and singers for their prayers and songs we’ve heard this week. As well, once again, as a citizen of Treaty 4, I acknowledge the continued welcome to Treaty 7 and bring well wishes from our treaty area. My name is Erica Beaudin and I’m the Executive Director of the Regina Treaty Status Indian Services.

**NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Nakuset, *kinanâskomitin*, and I apologize, I’m a horrible Cree speaker, for your presentation yesterday morning. Your First Nation, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, sits on some of the most beautiful land in all of this country. Your Chief, Tammy Cook-Searson, is pretty fierce and definitely a role model for all of us. I can see that you fit in well with your home community.

This week, we have heard from victim services
on Monday. Many of our provinces have their victim services within the police services. If we think of victim services to include domestic violence or interpersonal violence or any missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls’ positions, that’s basically what I’m talking about. Now, yesterday, you talked about having or needing a liaison between the woman and police. In your experience, do you believe that when governments decide to have police-based victim services positions, that these positions aren’t as effective as the victim services or advocacy positions that are community-based?

NAKUSET: Sorry, you want to ask that again?

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Okay. Do you believe that, when governments decide to have police-based victim services, so the victim services are, like right in the police services --

NAKUSET: Like in each station?

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Most of the time, in the municipal police forces. That these positions aren’t as effective as victim services if they are in the community-based organizations?

NAKUSET: They should be in the community organizations. They shouldn’t be at the police. I’m not sure if I’m answering your question properly, but I know that we -- if they were to give an office at the shelter
where we can process and get the expertise to do the
processing, that would actually work. It doesn't work when
they go to the police stations. I don't know if I'm
answering --

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. Do you believe
that police and governments continue to keep the power
balance when they have their victim services positions
report to them and their systems as opposed to first and
foremost accountable to the people that they are stating
that they're serving?

**NAKUSET:** Yes. And you ask really long
questions.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** I apologize. Imagine
being one of my kids. They --

(LAUGHTER)

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** -- gloss over
immediately.

(LAUGHTER)

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** So my next question is
-- this week I posed a very similar question to the panel
on health services. It's often difficult to create
long-term programming for the women when as CBOs we are
juggling several grants and contribution agreements, and
many of those are only for months -- month-long initiatives
and definitely not past a year. You spoke of some of this
NAKUSET: The statement that we don't -- our funding is too short?

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Yes, and just constant juggling of several?

NAKUSET: Yes, absolutely.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: As well, have you noticed the amount allowed for administration and staffing, so the eligible expenditures that we get -- I'm also an executive director of a service delivery agency -- the amount that we're allowed every year seems to be decreasing for administration and staffing, and then we're expected to do more programming. So the money is going directly to programming, however they don't acknowledge that you need staff in order to do that, and then you have more reporting.

The only -- and I had stated this, the only more we're expected to do is reporting and more programming. Would you say this has been your experience?

NAKUSET: Yes. I would also like to say that they have a tendency to cut down -- let's say I have an outreach worker, back in the day it was her salary and it was emergency funds and it was bus tickets, well, they cut all that stuff out, so now I have to get additional monies because when a woman is in crisis and she's outside
and she can't eat and she can't feed her children, the
shelter will pay for it because the government no longer
thinks that is important, but we know it is.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Absolutely. For the
record, could you state what would be your best-case
scenario funding and reporting-wise for providing services
and programming for women?

**NAKUSET:** Oh, boy. I think funding needs to
be on par with other organizations. I think that we need
to be -- in order to retain the proper staff, we need to
have the right salaries.

I think in terms of reporting, it should be
based on their -- their healing plan as opposed to, you
know, out of the 50 clients how many are going to be drug
and alcohol free by the end of the year? We can't promise
that with one-year funding that anyone is going to be
alcohol and drug free. They have years of trauma to go
through, and that is setting is us up to fail. So I think
that it needs to be what we think is -- you know, we need
to evaluate it and they need to trust us to know that we
know what we're doing.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Ms. Nakuset,
you spoke of reconciliation yesterday, there is a definite
push for us as Indigenous people to embrace the
government's initiatives of reconciliation. We know that
the truth part of truth and reconciliation is a very
difficult discussion to have. Do you believe that Canada
is ready for the truth of Indigenous peoples?

NAKUSET: I don't know if they're ready for
it, but they're going to get it.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Both the positive and
the negative?

NAKUSET: Absolutely.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: For those of us who live
in the city, other than having arts and cultural activities
to celebrate who we are, how do we participate in the truth
process for non-Indigenous people so that we may get to
reconciliation?

NAKUSET: The truth part, it needs to be in
all education levels. It needs to be -- okay, so
obviously -- oh, my goodness.

Not too long ago I was asked if I could do
something on reconciliation for a -- primary schools, so,
you know, kindergarten to grade 6. And they wanted to know
about the truth, and the truth is not so easy for this age
group to digest. So what I suggested was look at the 11
Nations, look at the beauty of each culture and have the
children do paintings and learn their stories and learn
their culture and the differences, and they did it.

That's -- you know, it has to be targeted to
each level, and, you know, that -- those 94
recommendations, they should be able to recite them at,
like, all the institutional levels. I'll go in and ask
them. Well, in a perfect world.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** If we envision true
reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
in what is now Canada, what do you believe this will look
like in the funding of services for Indigenous women and
children?

**NAKUSET:** We would get more.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you.

**NAKUSET:** Thank you.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of
addictions treatment facilities for Indigenous women. You
stated that six weeks is not long enough. Do you believe
that an integrated women's treatment facility that
prioritizes trauma, PTSD, addictions, life skills that is
grounded in Indigenous culture, perhaps being as long of a
stay as six months, would you agree this would be more of a
long-term solution towards a healthy life than a six-week
addictions treatment facility?

**NAKUSET:** Yes, and on top of that they
should be able to keep their children with them. Because a
lot of the times if they know their kids are going to go
into care, well, they don't want to lose that connection.
So allowing them to have a child program in the same facility is — would be key.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you once again, Ms. Nakuset.

**JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Ms. Nepinak.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** (Speaking in Native language) for your presentation yesterday. I have not visited the Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, however I'd love to visit one day.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** In regards to the continuum of services in a women's, children's, family's case plan, how important is it to -- in providing uninterrupted services to overall wellbeing?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, the focus should be on keeping family together and keeping mom and child together, and so our service plan is really about doing just that, and ensuring that the basic needs, for one, are met, including food, clothing and shelter. But also a safe and affordable home to go to with transitional supports and longer term supports from -- from our outreach workers, as well as our cultural connections in the community.
MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you. Yesterday you spoke at length about the challenges with funding. There are many ineligible expenditures that are in our contribution agreements, however we know they are integral to the wellbeing of our families. A quick example would be nutrition, many of our contribution agreements don't believe that eating is a good -- is part of the wellbeing of serving Indigenous people, or they may give you 50 cents for a meal.

In your discussions -- in your discussion you commented the very practical issue such as transportation and the example I gave, but I'm going to ask you about knowledge keepers or Elder services. These are integral to the wellbeing of our participants, correct?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Would it be your recommendation that all contribution agreements allow for increased eligibility to our knowledge keepers and Elders?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Actually, I believe that our contribution agreements or any contracts or grants that we receive with government or municipal agencies should include Elders as an essential service, not as a side if we have additional money, but it should be part of the funding structure.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: In many of our
contribution agreements, of course for the safety and wellbeing of our participants, it includes criminal records checks, vulnerable sector checks, those types of things, and our knowledge keepers have no issue with this. That's on the safety part, but how do we get around sometimes our funding agencies requiring us to validate or legitimize our knowledge keepers or Elders as service providers?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I think that's -- that's a role of the community, and I think that that also depends on where the community is in terms of how that validation happens to Elders. And I think it needs to be left to the community to -- to monitor that, as well as to place the values that are -- that are integral to who the Elders are, but also a monitoring system to ensure that these are all safe folks to do the work that they do.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** All right. You spoke on the war on Indigenous women.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Do you believe the chronic under funding or not funding programs for the safety of Indigenous women is a tactic of assimilation or genocide of the governments?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely it is. I think when we -- when we -- I mean, I gave the stat yesterday about the shelters, and -- and how many
provincial shelters there are just here in Alberta, which
is more than the number of shelters across Canada for First
Nations women. I mean, the disparity is huge. And it
happens, not only in the shelters, but also in -- in the
various other areas that we have talked about in the last
couple of days.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. So where does
this leave reconciliation in this country, if there is a
belief, and I -- I have to say, I share it, because we work
with the people every single day. Where does this leave
reconciliation in this country then, if that is the part of
truth in government?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I -- I am not sure
that reconciliation has begun. I mean, talk is cheap,
right? I mean, we -- we've heard about the 97
recommendations, and I think it was Senator Sinclair who
said, "This is going to be a very difficult process, and
people are going to get really pissed off," he said, "When
these conversations start happening around reconciliation."
So I'm not sure that we have begun to do that. And I -- the
-- the province makes -- not the province, but certainly the
Federal Government also makes those promises where things
will change. But, like an abusive situation, unless there
is a behavioural change, it's not going to happen.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of
normalized violence.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: M’hm.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: So in 2005, I’m just
anecdotally, I’m not submitting anything, which is now
already 13 years ago. I conducted a study in Saskatchewan
where when we first entered a community, both on and off
reserve, women stated that only three out of ten of them
experienced violence. After our education seminar, we sat
and we talked, then number jumped to ten out of ten.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Do you believe very basic
education and then services after to support the woman, are
essential for healing for women?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely. I think it’s
critical to -- to saving lives and to reducing the incidents
of violence in our communities across the country.

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you very much for
answering my questions.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you. Now, I’m
really going to butcher this, so please help me out.
Niawen’kó:wa, is Hodinohso:ni for thank you.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Niawen’kó:wa.
MS.ERICA BEAUDIN: Oh.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I was looking --

Niawen'kó:wa.

(LAUGHTER)


Thank you, Ms. Montour for your presentation yesterday. Yesterday, you discussed how staff in our helping agencies have to be everything from teachers to spiritual guides. I can attest to this as well. In the absence of a monetary windfall, with unlimited positions, how do we as EDs, or executive directors, or board members support the technical or cultural training, especially, because we basically don’t get any money for professional development for our staff, so they can feel comfortable in all of those areas that they end up providing for our people?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, I think, on the reserve anyway, we have at Six Nations, we have -- we have our resource centre, which is filled with our traditional Chiefs and our faith keepers, and they help us. So they -- they’ll come and help us any time we -- we ask for help. We -- I’ve -- of course, I would never ask them to come and do that for free. So that’s, you know, I would pay them the same -- the same cost I would pay, like, a psychologist. There’s no way I’m going to underpay them to come. We -- we pay them very well for their time.
And -- so we, at this point in time, we were very creative. I agree, I heard that word a few times. We have to be creative. And what we did, because we -- we see the need for a cultural resource person. So what we did is we -- we did get on the -- the mini-proposals that I wrote last year, I wrote over $2 million of proposals last year. It’s all I did and brought that into Ganohkwasra. And I was able to hire a cultural resource person who is -- his numbers that he -- he helps every single unit. I mean, I was even thinking I should have brought him here with me, you know, as -- as I come out here. But he helps every single unit. And from being at the Youth Lodge with the kids, to being in a shelter, to going into groups. You know, so he’s all over the place. But it would be nice to have him full-time. You know, we need people like this. And paid well.

**MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M’hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Paid well for the knowledge that he has. He’s -- he’s been raised in immersion, and he’s been raised in the culture. And he’s well respected in the community. And he needs to be paid well. And so -- you know, it would be nice for every single shelter to have a cultural resource person such as this. You know, and not have to, you know, this person is only here on a contract basis, unfortunately, as many of our good
programs are. That -- then -- then they’re gone. And it’s just a tease for our people. But I really strongly believe in the value, especially in this field, where people are searching. The value of having that type of leadership and that type of guidance for, not only our staff, but also our -- our participants.

**MS.ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. How do you believe that the voice of the people we serve, the women and children, be included in the criteria as well as the reporting for the funding of us as CBOs? And how do we all remain accountable to the people we serve?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Can you repeat that?

**MS.ERICA BEAUDIN:** How do you believe the voice of the people, so the people to have a voice, be included in criteria for -- so for criteria for -- criteria for funding, as well as the reporting, how we report back as to successes or determinants of success for our funding?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I like the narrative approach. I really night -- like, the idea of -- rather than, you know, writing the reports, I like the -- I like to hear from the people themselves. Like, I say -- shared yesterday, we do our own internal shelter review. And I get to sit with the people myself.

**MS.ERICA BEAUDIN:** M’hm.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And -- and I get to hear
what their evaluation is of our shelter. You know, and --
and so I -- I -- I’d like to hear -- I appreciate the
narrative approach, the story telling. You know, the
numbers speak for themselves. If we have 300 in our
community attending community events, for us on -- on
reserve, that’s a lot. And, you know, what funders tend to
do is they tend to say, “We want something different now.”
We -- you’ve been doing that over and over again. But what
they don’t get is, 300, that’s successful. Why change
what’s working? But -- so sometimes funders have a
different approach, you know.
And so -- and I -- I believe in sharing too.
We have Hodinohso:ni communities right around us. Oneida’s
just down the road. Tyendinaga, Akwesasne, and I -- I --
what I try to do is, we try to partner with each other. And
we try to -- I want to know what’s successful in their
territories so I can do it in mine. You know, so I really
like the idea of us taking the time to -- to network with
each other. That’s really vital.

MS.ERICA BEAUDIN: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: And support each other.
It -- we can’t do this work alone, we just can’t.

MS.ERICA BEAUDIN: Okay. So thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Thank
you, Ms. Beaudin.
MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you to everyone on the panel today.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At this point, I would like to request a 15-minute break.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes.

We’ll resume at 10:50.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Five zero.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It’s not lunch yet?

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. I know.

--- Upon recessing at 10:36 a.m.

--- Upon reconvening at 10:58 a.m.

NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: ... throughout Canada are at risk.

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Would you agree that you have little to no ability to have a say in how much funding your shelter gets from year to year?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Would you agree that the funding that you do get, is a function of what you got the year before, as opposed to the needs and services that the Indigenous women who come to your shelter require?
NAKUSET: Absolutely.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: You have been in the area of shelters for 20 to 30 years?

NAKUSET: Me?

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Yes.


MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Only 20, okay.

NAKUSET: I’m not that old.

(LAUGHTER)

NAKUSET: Not that anyone else here is either.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Has anyone from the funders come to you and said to you, “You are an expert in shelters, what do we need to give you in terms of budget lines, to help you do your work?”

NAKUSET: Never.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Do you think that that failure to ask you, and the other panel members, about your input as experts in the area of shelters is a critical error?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Is it fair to say that women, Indigenous women who come to your shelter for protection for themselves and their children, quiet often attract the bureaucracy of Child and Family Services?
NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And is it fair to say that, today, Indigenous women who come to protect themselves and their children, as a result of coming to shelter, may in fact, put themselves and their children at risk of being separated?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Is it fair to say that the lives of Indigenous women should not be dictated by the particular line -- on a budget line, in an application for funding?

NAKUSET: Sorry. Am I -- again, I’m --

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Oh, sorry. That’s a combo --

NAKUSET: Is that a yes or no?

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Is it fair to say --

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: -- that the lives of Indigenous women should not be a function of -- of budget line on an application for funding?

NAKUSET: They shouldn’t be a budget line.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Is it fair to say that in doing your work, you have to move those budget lines around in order to pay your workers?

NAKUSET: You know, I don’t know, and --
necessarily if it’s to pay our workers, because I do have a budget line for that. But there are other services that I need that I have to move around. So, yeah, the other budget categories that we have to -- you know, like I talked about emergency funds for outreach, we don’t have that in our budget, so I have to find other things that we haven’t spent and put it over there so that we can.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that the complexity of Indigenous women -- women coming to shelter today is much more complex than it was 20 years ago?

**NAKUSET:** Yeah. I think that there’s always emerging issues that grow. So we’ve -- as soon as we see them, then we address them, and then we have to create new programs because of it.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But these new programs that you create are not a function of the funding that you get?

**NAKUSET:** No.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The main thing that you get for funding is what you got the year before?

**NAKUSET:** Yes. Basically, a roof over our head, food, and certain stuff.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And whatever policy is in place with respect to Indigenous culture, you don’t get asked those questions at the time of funding?
NAKUSET: No.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And art therapy --

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: -- is not on your budget line?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: But art therapy can save the life of an Indigenous child or woman, by allowing them to speak their voice about their trauma?

NAKUSET: Well, draw their voice.

But --

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Yes. Pardon me. And when you testified about the cooperation, or lack of cooperation by the police --

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: -- would it be fair to say that whether police buy into the concept of shelters is not an option but a mandate?

NAKUSET: It should be.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And when the police disrespect you and the work that you were trying to do, they disrespect, across the nation, the lives of Indigenous women and the lives of Indigenous children?

NAKUSET: Yes. And I’d even say Indigenous men as well.
MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Thank you. And without beating this point to death, there is not enough funding for shelters across the nation?

NAKUSET: No. There should be, though.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And there is not enough sustainable funding to allow you, in your work, to make the lives of Indigenous women and children better over time?

NAKUSET: If I had the adequate funding, I would probably be more at the shelter. But instead, I have a tendency to be running around the city and trying to find more monies, create new programs, so it definitely takes away.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And is there a disconnect between the silos of money that you see for women with addiction problems versus women in shelters versus women with mental health issues?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And yet, the women who come to your shelter are not segregated by those individual issues. They come with all of those issues?

NAKUSET: That’s right.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: But they are funded separately, as if they were separate human beings?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And that is
fundamentally unfair?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: I believe you said that the system doesn’t want to change?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: The system was there before you came to the world of shelters?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And who made that system up, you have no idea?

NAKUSET: The government.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Good point. But that system runs, in your view, independently of the actual needs of Indigenous women and children?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And the lives of Indigenous women and children should not depend on a bureaucratic machine?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Because the lives of women and children of the Indigenous culture deserve the very best that Canada can bring them?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And whether that is by province or by nation, they deserve every bit of funding
dollar that they receive and much more?

NAKUSET: Yes. I think we should get it by province and by Canada as a nation. Yeah. I think we should be double-dipping.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And in terms of healing, if you do not know your past, you cannot know your future. That is to say -- and I’ll just rephrase the question. If you don’t know your own culture and the story of your own culture, it’s difficult to move forward when you talk to your own children about who they are?

NAKUSET: Okay. Well, now you’re making a personal -- I mean, I’m part of the Sixties Scoop, so I don’t know much about my own culture.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Fair enough.

NAKUSET: But I am, you know, trying. So I think that you have to, sort of, do your research. You know, I mean, Lac La Ronge Indian Band has beautiful websites, so I gave my kids, you know, Cree names. I didn’t call them “Bucket.” I -- I, you know, I looked at the website and I found appropriate names like Makisis (ph), Mahikan (ph), and Kisstine (ph).

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Believe me, I -- I mean no disrespect. What I’m saying is that Indigenous-led shelters, provide that culture to --

NAKUSET: M’hm.
MS. CATHERINE DUNN: -- their participants.

NAKUSET: We try. I think at the Native Women’s Shelter, you know, we -- there’s 11 different Nations, plus all the other communities that come across Canada. So we have a really large group of people that come. We can’t cater to every one single culture, but we -- we do our best.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Thank you. My next questions are for Ms. Nepinak.

JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Ms. Nepinak, how many -- I -- I think in your evidence, you said that you receive core funding for 32 beds from the province; is that fair?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That’s correct.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Does that mean that there are 32 Indigenous women who require the assistance of a shelter?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No, there are many, many Indigenous women in this province that require sheltering that are turned away every day.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Do you know where the number 32 came from, in terms of how you get funding?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, partially, it’s -- it’s on the size of the building, and partially, it’s on the
need of the organization that is determined, again, by the Province of Alberta. There are other emergency shelters within the city -- within the City of Calgary, and so some of those other shelters are -- are bigger than we are. They may have 40 to some -- the other has 50 beds.

And they determine, well, we -- you had 27 beds, so we’re going to invest this many millions of dollars into family violence, and therefore we’re going to -- you know, you get a piece of that pie. And -- and they look at what our numbers, our statistics, are, because we’re, you know, more than 90 percent capacity, you need extra beds. So it’s just recently that we got the extra core funding for 32 beds.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Can you say how many Indigenous women and children need help of your shelter across the province today?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Let’s start with across the province. Yesterday, I gave a statistic that, in 2015-2016, one of the provincial bodies that release the stats indicated that there was -- I -- I had my numbers somewhere yesterday, but there were 16,385 women and children that were turned away from shelters in the Province of Alberta. And so if we factor the fact that 65 percent of the women that are going into shelters are Indigenous, that number -- and I haven’t done the math, but it’s approximately, 10,000
women in 2015-2016, that were turned away from shelters.

Now, if we look at Awo Taan Healing Lodge, we -- we have
more than 600 women that are turned away each year from Awo
Taan Healing Lodge, women and children.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** So province-wide, that
means that by being turned away, approximately 10,000
Indigenous women --

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- are at risk of being
murdered today.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And what that means is
that the children of 10,000 Indigenous women will lose their
parent or parents as the result of a funding issue.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That’s correct.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** As opposed to a
fundamental human right.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That’s correct.

**(SHORT PAUSE)**

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** My next questions are
for Ms. Montour.

**SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Ms. Montour, in your
evidence, if I heard you correctly, you stated that 95
percent of women who attend shelter have experienced sexual assault.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Are you funded to deal with the trauma that your women have as a result of being sexually assaulted?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: We just received funding in -- we just started our sexual assault program as of, actually, we just opened it two weeks ago.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: So we hadn’t been prior.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: All right. And what percentage of women who attend your shelter have addiction issues? Can you say?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can’t say. When I talked about the 95 percent, I was referring to the whole organization. Not just shelter, but our outreach services.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Addictions, for -- I -- I would have to talk to my shelter staff. They would have a better idea of that than I.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: But it’s fair to say that many, many women who come to shelter have addiction issues.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: That’s fair to say, yes.
MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And it’s very fair to say that -- say that women who come to shelters have mental health issues as a result of the trauma that they have received outside of that shelter?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely.

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: And a woman who comes to shelter with trauma often faces a new trauma in that Child and Family Services may come and take her children.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

(SHORT PAUSE)

MS. CATHERINE DUNN: The resources that were available for shelters 30 years ago haven’t changed that much in 30 years, is that fair?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: For us, we work very hard to increase our resources, and I think that, when you think about the world of shelters, what I am -- am aware of is that shelter, that concept of shelter, that concept came from a -- middle-class, non-Native women, back in the ‘60s and ‘70s. And then when we had our shelters, First Nations people, Indigenous people, back in the ‘80s or ‘90s, a lot of our shelters took on that concept, but we didn’t. We always were true to the values of our people as Hodinöhsö:ni families, rather than just it being specific to women. I think, throughout the years, we have increased our services with our -- you know, our core funding has increased over
the years, depending on the government. Depending on the
time. I -- I also remember we had our second-stage housing,
we had workers there that were funded, and then the next
government came along and they took away those -- those
funds. So it depends on the government.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And should the lives of
Indigenous women and children depend on who is in
government? For their protection?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** I have one last
question, and that is in relation to culture. How important
is the ability to provide culturally appropriate services to
the women who come to your shelter?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** One hundred percent
important.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. Those are my
questions.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Migwetch.

**MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Good morning.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. Dunn.

I would like to invite Ms. Ordyniec on behalf of the
Northern Alliance for Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Treaty 3.
She will have 19 minutes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Morning. I’d like to
just begin by acknowledging the traditional territory of
Treaty 7 as well as the Métis Nation Region 3 and thank the Blackfoot people for being so warm, welcoming, and kind during this difficult week. I’d also like to thank the panel members on behalf of both Nishnawbe Aski Nation as well as Grand Council Treaty 3 for all the very important work that you do.

The Northern Treaty Alliance is made up of 77 communities in northern Ontario and eastern -- eastern Manitoba, and my first questions are going to be directed to Ms. Montour.

SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: Ms. Montour, are you familiar with the NAN and Treaty 3 territory?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, I am.

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: Thank you. And could you give us a little bit of your understanding of shelters in the north?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: What I do know about the north is that they have -- there needs to be special attention to the north. Because of the -- the prices are incredibly high, travel to get -- for women to get into the shelter, it costs not hundreds of dollars, but thousands of dollars, because we’re talking about a plane -- plane ride. What I know about the north is they face, you know -- I
think I have challenges with our one police, they have several police that they work with, not just one, and so they have to try their best to educate those police.

What I think of the northern shelters is they're -- they're single staffed, they're lucky to be single staffed. That they have -- their director is usually called a coordinator, even though that director does the same work as I do, or that coordinator does exactly the same work as I do.

That coordinator is on the phone, she's not only doing what I'm doing, she's giving out meds, she's taking shifts, she's doing all those things too. She's working with the police. What I know about those northern shelters is I have total utmost respect for them.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you for your answer. Would you agree, based on what you said, that safe places for women to go, for young girls to go in the north, is in a crisis situation?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Are you aware through your work with Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, if anyone that is responsible for funding these shelters has gone to the north to see what the situation is like?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I'm not aware of that
MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: Do you think that that would be something that you would recommend?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely.

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: Thank you. Are you familiar with the Family Wellbeing Program?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: One of the pillars of that program is safe housing.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: But it seems that infrastructure is a barrier. Can you speak on that?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: What I know about the north is that, you know, for fly-in communities, that they have -- it takes years to be able to bring in the material for the fly-in communities in the north, and that often, you know, infrastructure is -- is -- it's not easy to come by, you know, it's -- because of the cold temperatures in the winters, a lot of the -- by the time they get all the materials in it's no good, so they're in constant state of need for infrastructure, or they're being evacuated from their communities because of various floods and various weather conditions.

So I -- I am aware of the Family Wellbeing Program and the safe -- the safe -- I guess it's a safe
housing component of it.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Yesterday you spoke about initiatives, Dorothy McKay in Big Trout and Margaret Kisik (ph) in Fort Albany, and I wonder if you could expand on how those initiatives should be extended to other communities and how we could support that?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Those ladies are beautiful ladies, I need to say. And with Dorothy, you know, she's a very hard worker. She's fluent in her language, as most of them are in their shelter. They speak their language fluently, and rarely do they speak English, as a matter of fact.

It's -- you know, she -- Dorothy actually was once on our board of directors for ASO, and we always so enjoyed her when she came to our meetings. And she always spoke to us about the culture shock to come from her community, a fly-in community, and the number of planes it would take her to get to Toronto, to -- you know, and it would take her a while to be able to settle into English, right, but she would share with us the way things were in her community.

And what we have done, and one thing that I have actually applied for, is we applied to do a shelter swap. And this was -- what we would like to do is we would like to bring the north -- the northern shelters, some
workers, two workers, to the southern shelters and put them on the floor with guidance and support.

We -- that was approved, but what we wanted to do was do the opposite, is to take the southern shelters, two from the southern shelters and send them to the north because I'd love my staff to go and see what Dorothy does and be trained by Dorothy. I'd love that. That would enhance our learning so much. And Margaret.

So that -- I guess that was ASO's way of trying to support our members and trying to overcome that barrier between the north and the south so that we share our resources and we honour each other's strengths. So it was approved one way, but it wasn't approved the other way, so -- I like that idea.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** And you would agree with me that you would recommend that that sort of arrangement be funded as well as supported?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And as we're speaking about the north and the visits from workers in the north, what about the women in your shelters who have come maybe from the north? Do you have -- do you have women in your shelters?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** And what are the
specific -- the specific supports that they would need in
your -- in the more urban setting?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I know for them, I know
it's a culture shock. It's a culture shock for them to
come into the south, so I think that we have to be really
trying to help them with that culture shock to help them to
be safe in our communities.

A lot of times, you know, they will say,
wow, you have so much here, you know, you have so much
here, and -- and we do compared to the north, we really do.
But I know that one of the things that they have that a lot
of us in the south don't have, is they have their language
and we are very envious of that.

So, you know, in our territory we don't
have -- we don't have Ojibway speakers or we don't have
Cree speakers, but we do have Haudenosaunee speakers.
So -- but usually that's not a big issue, usually everybody
will speak English anyway. But we do, you know, we make
sure we have all the cultural -- what they need culturally.

We also have New Credit that's right next
door to us, right next door, that we do access the Ojibway
culture there, so sweats from there as well, to meet the
needs of anybody that's Ojibway.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. I just
want to turn to the New Beginnings, the Standards for
Ontario Indigenous Shelters. And specifically Section 1.1 talks about access criteria.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** I'll just read from the standards: (As Read)

Shelter services are for all those who identify as a person aged 16 years or older and their dependents who are experiencing, threatened by and/or affected by violence or abuse of any kind.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** And I -- you can answer the question in respect of all shelters, however especially with respect to the north. There's a 16-year age standard, as we've read in here, and we've heard testimony that young girls 10 and 11 years old are victims to violence and human trafficking, so I'm wondering if you can just speak on that?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, I am aware of some of the shelters from the -- from the Nan territory that actually are being -- because of that issue, you know, they're being forced to take in people younger than 16. So -- and they do, you know, they do, they take in people younger than 16. Of course, they're working with their
child welfare agencies too.

And -- and with us at Ganohkwasra, we have our youth facility that we will -- will assess the situation. Of course, we're working with child welfare at that age as well, but we assess the situation. We might keep them in the shelter for a period of time, but our goal is to get them into the youth lodge, you know, so -- and, of course, like I said, working closely with child welfare with that age group for sure.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank you for the work that you've done.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Thank you.

**JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Ms. Nepinak, I would just like to ask you one or two questions, if I could.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** You mentioned peer support within -- within the lodge, and I wonder how you facilitate and promote that, and if any of the clients have become supports or workers in the shelter themselves?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, there has been all of that, but we do have some programs that are specific. For example, on our -- we have two programs, which is our -- through our outreach program for Monday
night healing circle, and this for women that have been in
the shelter, and they -- and that is facilitated by an
Elder and a staff member. But we often have women in
the -- in the circle who lead, for example, what -- what
the discussion might be for the evening and give examples
of that and -- and engage other women to -- to talk about
that. And that usually begins by them speaking about their
own experiences around violence and how they dealt with it.

We have another program called Women's
Circle of Safety, and this is a peer support group of women
who come together and say, "Well, this is what I did. Have
you tried this? Have you thought about that? Why don't
I -- why don't I show you or why don't I -- this is
a -- here's some recommendations, here's some books to
read, or have you talked to so-and-so." Those kinds of
peer support happens a lot. And there's a lot of strength
that are -- and the friendships that are developed
as -- as -- as a result of that peer support while in the
shelter often is in the community, as well, where they will
get together. They'll -- you know, they'll babysit for one
another. They'll -- they'll even share groceries and share
family time together, and community and cultural time. So
the peer support and informal supports, I believe, are
very, very critical to -- to the development and to the
healing process of many of the women -- women and children
that we serve.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. In -- in respect of the -- the model that -- yeah, that your -- your lodge is based on, how do you see that extending to permanent housing?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, our -- our logo -- are -- are you referring to our logo and what it means?

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Just -- just the way that you run your shelter. Do you see any of those --

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, yeah. Absolutely. And we are -- our -- our vision statement is "Nurturing families living in peace." And so if we were -- and -- and I would love to have a second stage. I mean, we -- there has been discussion about that, as well, and how we would extend that is by taking those core values that we have developed at Awo Taan Healing Lodge through our staff, through our governance, and through our policies and procedures to align with -- with our core values as Indigenous people, and then we carry those into a transitional home and long-term housing.

Now, having said that, that has been an issue for funders because funders don't understand that we all have spirit, that we all have the need for -- to -- to have the Elders in their lives, to have spirit and wisdom
be part of our growth and development. And -- and it also
means that we can keep a house around us if we're
spiritually strong.

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank
you for all of your work.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

**NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

**MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC:** Nakuset, I'd just
like to ask you one question. You identified allies, and
we've heard testimony throughout these hearings about the
importance of non-Indigenous allies to the work that you
do. And besides funding, if, you know -- besides if they
could give you everything you want, what are the things
that you need in terms of non-Indigenous allies?

**NAKUSET:** I think that non-Indigenous allies
can also lobby, right? So I remember in -- in Montreal,
you know, I hosted a rally for Tina Fontaine, and there was
a lot of people that came, and a lot of them were
non-Indigenous. And I was, like, you should -- you should
also do something about this. I mean, we are here because
we are outraged, but you need to also go to your government
and say that change has to be made.

So I think that's what we need to do,
because sometimes our allies are taken more seriously than
the angry Indians that are, like -- you know, we got
another letter from her. Oh, wait. We got a letter from
this lovely non-Indigenous woman. Hey, maybe we should
listen to her. It's just a different perspective. And I
think there's power in that.

So I think people need to, you know, use
their -- their power if they want to, if they really
believe in, you know, helping the Indigenous population.
That's what they should do, as well.

MS. KRYSTYN ORDYNIEC: Thank you. And thank
you for all the work that you do, and thank you to the
Commission. Those are my questions.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you,
Ms. Ordyniec.

The Commission would like to invite up next
Ms. Virginia Lomax on behalf of Native Women's Association
of Canada. Ms. Lomax will have 19 minutes.

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Good morning. I want
to first thank the Blackfoot nation, Treaty 7, and Métis
Region 3 for welcoming us to their territory today. I want
to recognize the sacred items in the room with us and the
Elders for their prayers. I'd also like to thank everybody
who has come here today to fight for Indigenous women and
girls and the two-spirit LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse people
in a good way today.
I'm going to start by saying that I am -- I'm not completely comfortable cross-examining the witnesses because you are all the solution. Your work is the solution, and you fight the problem every day. You are not the barrier to success or the problem, and you and your work are the solution. And I wish I could be cross-examining the barriers and the problems. But today I'm not.

And so I'd like to give you my time today instead. I have one question that I would like to ask each of the witnesses, and you can take as much time or as little time as you would like to answer.

You've all spoken about chronic underfunding and a chronic lack of empathy and understanding from many people, including those who make funding decisions. And I'd like to give you my time. If you would like to ask your own questions to these people on the record, are there any questions or issues that you need answered or addressed that aren't being answered or addressed that you would like on the public record?

I don't mean to cause any harm by asking this question. I just want to give you time for your truth.
CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. LOMAX:

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I -- I -- yeah. Thank you for -- for the question. Can I start?

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Please.

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Do you understand what you're being asked?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I believe I understand what I'm being asked.

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: We just want to make sure she understands what she's being asked.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Can you tell me, then?

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: She can tell you again.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Okay.

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Are there questions or issues that you need answered or addressed that you're not getting answers --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: -- that you would like on the public record today?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Yes. You know, with -- with respect to funding, you've all heard the story about our chronic underfunding and the need to develop more safe housing or safe housing models across the country, and in particular, First Nations. I mean, the disparity is
huge, and the need to -- to fund -- it doesn't matter where you are, whether you're in Calgary or whether you're in the far North or -- or you're in the east. The funding should be at parity, and the supports and the services, I'd like to see, again, Elders as an essential component to any funding model.

Increased supports for -- for women who are transitioning from the north and into -- into southern parts of the country, and -- and having safe places for -- for the women so that they can have community supports, whether they're outreach or community settlement programs where they become acquainted with their new community, their -- their grocery store, where the doctor's office is, where the school is, where the recreational facilities are, and where the cultural supports might be. I think that's really important, as well.

I'd also like to say that with regards to the justice system and fairness and respect and equity to Indigenous women -- for example, I'd like to mention Judge Queen's Bench Robert Graesser who, on the Cindy Gladue case, conducted himself in an unacceptable way where he referred to Ms. Gladue as, you know, for example, that prostitute or that Native -- that Native girl, you know, that kind of thing. And that I believe that he should be
reviewed by the Judicial Council of Canada. I'd like to see that happen.

I'd also like to see folks like Judge Robin Camp who said to the Indigenous girl, "Why couldn't you keep your knees together?"

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** M'hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so he has been reinstated to practice law here in Alberta. And -- and the recommendation would be we need to have more Indigenous judges, both men and women, who have the lived experience, but also are the lawyers, who -- who can represent us in a fair and equitable way with respect and dignity in the courthouses.

I have more, but I'm going to pass that down now. Migwetch.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Now, if -- for the question and the time, I would like to say, I think, just from the last person that came up, I would, like, definitely agree that there needs to be more funding to our Northern communities. They have special needs. Really, there should be somebody here from the north speaking for themselves, because the -- I’m probably not doing them any justice. I do the best I can, but there needs to be more funding to the north. You know, in -- in Ontario, there’s shelters that are funded by many, many ministries, and every shelter
should have that opportunity to be core funded by many
ministries, not just one.

So shelters should certainly be funded and we
should not be having waitlists, you know. Waitlists are --
they’re not the answer. They’re not the solution. Like I
said, we have a waitlist right now. I can tell you we have
a waitlist of 30 women, waiting for a counselor right now,
and 20 men, and -- and anywhere from 20 to 30 children are
waiting for counselors. That’s not -- that’s not good. So
we should be getting funded so that we don’t have these
waitlists. We -- people are ready for counselling and
they’re ready to -- for support and -- and -- and the
government needs to pay for that.

I strongly agree with the cultural resource
people. We, you know, we need -- we need our cultural
resource people, and they need to be properly funded, and
instead of, you know, I -- I spend so much of my time
looking for money, begging for money, applying for money,
writing reports, and then the -- those are only temporary
fundings. You know? They’re just temporary money, then
they’re gone in a year and the people are -- my community
say, you know, that’s just a tease, you know? We’re --
we’re -- and they’re complaining, you know, that -- that
service is gone. It’s not a solution. You know, just these
temporary pockets of money that make us compete with each
other, by the way. And that -- that’s not good practice, either.

No shelter should be single-staffed. There should be, you know, we’re -- we’re -- this is a high-risk field. It’s a high-risk business, you know. People are, you know, there’s certain -- there’s things that can happen in shelters that are very high-risk, so no shelter should be single-staffed. It’s -- there should be more funding that allow us to properly staff our -- our floor so that we’re not putting our -- our -- the lives of our own people at risk. Being in shelter, we’re doing this work.

Definitely funding parity. I’m really -- it’s very upsetting, you know. There was a question somebody asked, how much your staff make. Well, we -- we start our staff, up until last year, we started our staff at 35,000. That’s how much we’d pay for our staff. We had staff there for 20 years making $35,000 a year. That’s discrimination. So we’ve been able to raise that to 40,000, and I’m -- I’m very pleased with that, but I’m aware that there’s shelters out there that belong to our organization that are making $25,000. That’s not right. Mainstream shelters, they’re making, 50, 60, 75,000, that’s more than I make, for frontline work. I can’t say enough how passionate I am, the unfairness, the injustice, and I can’t help but wonder, is this because we’re an Indigenous women field,
that we get treated like this?

I also need to speak about -- the funding needs to go to the shelters. Being on-reserve, like I said, we have -- we’re very lucky. We’re -- have the support of our amazing Chief Hill, amazing Chief and council. We have the support of our Hodinohso:ni Confederacy. We’re very fortunate. But I am -- I’m aware that there’s other on-reserve shelters where the funding goes to their -- their chief and council, who are predominantly male, and they take their shelter funding and they use it to develop their roads or they use it for something else, and it takes away from the women in their community whose lives are -- whose -- who -- who are dying. So I really want to speak strongly about those shelters who are, you know, they’re -- our own are hurting us. And I -- and I’m -- and I’m not blaming that. Just -- it’s colonization, that’s what it is. It’s -- if there’s any anger in me, it’s towards colonization. I know how things are. So I think that money needs to go specifically to the shelters and there needs to be some accountability to ensure that it’s going to the women and the children and the families in the -- in the shelters.

Yeah. I -- I think I -- I think I got everything there. Thank you.

NAKUSET: So if we could have more funding, I would like to see more monies for -- and I’m going to talk
more about the community as a whole, not necessarily just
the shelter, because, you know, we’re a women’s shelter, but
we don’t service men except through our outreach for Cabot
Square, but I think there needs to be almost like an
empowerment fund. So that we can find the strength in each
Indigenous individual and -- and help them develop that
strength.

I think we need more funding for education in
Quebec, because the schools, elementary and high school,
there’s no -- okay, there’s a teeny-tiny bit of Indigenous
education in the -- in the books, in the history books, but
it is -- it is really incredibly sad. I think that we need
to have more monies for the lawyers in terms of, again,
education. They have, you know, the Gladue reports that are
not being utilized by the lawyers. They find it too hard to
fill out, but it’s the law, and they don’t even abide to the
own law, so that’s a problem. The racism in Montreal is
humongous. There needs to be more funding in, you know, a
racism team, the same thing with discrimination.

We need a wet shelter in Montreal. We need a
place where people that are under the influence, that aren’t
able to access shelters because they drink, and have a safe
place where they have, you know, people working there, still
giving out small amounts of alcohol so that they don’t go
into shock, and also have a component of addiction so that
when they’re ready to start talking about it, but also to keep them off the streets, because that’s when the police come and arrest them or the violence happens. So we’ve been asking for that for four years, and now the City of Montreal is like, okay, so we’re going to do a study. And it’s like, I’m sorry, Canada already has ten studies. You need to do another study? Stop studying it. Implement it now. And they’re not doing it, so again, they don’t like me too much, because this is how I talk to them. But it’s going to happen soon.

Education across the board, so -- and this is also education for First Nations. We don’t have enough. You know, we want to educate our people so that they can be the lawyers and doctors and psychologists and, you know, a lot of the -- the funding restrictions, those that are part of the Sixties Scoop, they don’t have their status, they can’t get monies to go to school.

So programming for kids in care. So all of those kids in the foster care system, there’s all kinds of programming we can do that -- that could be tailor-made. We had a program called Ronathahi:io. Don’t you have one called that, too? Yeah. So it means -- yeah, or “the good path.” That’s how I understood it. “The good path” in Mohawk. And we wanted to make it like a Big Brother/Big Sister program, so if we can match Indigenous community
members with the -- the children in care and they would spend time with them -- time with them within a year and give them that sort of cultural pride, even if it’s not the same nation, they would still have, sort of, empathy and they would -- I’m pretty sure, you know, they would learn the culture in order to teach a child about it. I think that would be great. And we’ve already tried to apply it a couple of years, but we only have a tiny bit of funding for it, so.

And then institutional accountability, and I actually talked about that checklist that the shelters do. Well, let’s do that for all of society. We go into every single organization, we, like, “Checklist ladies here. We’re going to see, are you -- have you been, you know, racist? You know, have you -- do you know your education? Can you mention a couple of the TRCs?” Like, let’s -- let’s force people to -- I don’t know. I know "force", you don't like that word, but let's hold people accountable. And, you know, have the residents -- this is my favorite -- have the residents review each service. You go to the hospital, someone takes you aside, “How did you like your services? Were you treated fairly? Were you treated in a -- were they -- you know, were they kind to you? Did they speak to you in a -- in a rude way?” You wouldn't believe the kind of stuff that we hear. So that would be Youth Protection,
police, schools, Welfare. Sometimes I send -- you know, the
women go to Welfare and they're told, “Go to the Immigration
office.” Really? So, yeah, there you go. There's my list.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** One more thing, if I
can -- if I can ask, please? I would like to see a
national -- whether it's a forum or a national network of
Indigenous women's shelters across this country, whether
we're on the reserve or whether we're in an urban setting,
but there is a -- a huge gap in the fact, and there is a
lot of knowledge and information and sharing because we
don't get together. We -- I mean, this is a wonderful
opportunity for us to -- to talk and share about our
problems, but there's much more than that. I mean, I'm
very interested in the great work that both are doing, but
after the -- the end of the day, we may never see each
other again.

But there -- so there is a need to -- to
support and fund a gathering of -- of shelter directors or
shelters to come together and resource -- and -- and
further to that, even to talk about developing a -- a
database so that we can share information across the
country. You know, currently we use Outcome Tracker, and I
know that that can be used across the country, but it needs
to be revised to -- to include some of the questions
that -- in some of the areas that we're concerned about
today. And again, we have no money. I mean, just to set
that up, we -- it's five to seven thousand dollars, and
that was ten years ago. So today, it would be much more.
And then to maintain that and then to have people maintain
that. So on and on and on. But there is a way
for -- there is a need for us to -- to do more talking.

**MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** Thank you.

**NAKUSET:** Sorry. And travel monies so we
can do this, and as well as to have, like, women's wellness
conferences. Like, in the United States, that once we went
as the Native Women's Shelter, and then we couldn't find
the monies again to do it. But that's really great for the
staff to, you know, sort of get best practices. And also,
you know, if we have, like, more money, we can bring the
residents so they can also see. So, yeah. Funding, like,
a whole big chunk for, you know, travel so we can go and
visit other shelters. And, you know, let's go to Australia
and New Zealand as well and see what they're doing down
there. I mean, they're doing good work too, so ...

**MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** You still have 40
seconds.

(LAUGHTER)

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would like to see us
fund our retreats. We do -- we do amazing retreats at
Ganohkwasra. We work with the family. We do women
retreats. We do family retreats. I would like to see those funded as a regular part of our core services that we provide. I'd also like to see us for -- funded for homelessness, as well. That's a whole different area. But I know many shelters, we take -- we as Indigenous shelters, we take them in, but in the mainstream, there's shelters specific for homelessness. But there we are again, stretching just because the need is there. We're doing it, and we're not getting paid for it.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. Lomax. I would like the Commissioners' instruction on this. It's now 10 to 12. We could call the next party. They would have 23 minutes. Or we could break for lunch and maybe come back a little early from lunch.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We'll stop now, and we will resume at 1:50, one-five-zero.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry. I think you're -- sorry.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You're right. (Indiscernible).

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, that's okay. So we can resume at 12:50? So it's a one-hour lunch, resuming at 12:50. Thank you.

*(SHORT PAUSE)*

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Rule 48 now means
that Mr. Blain and myself cannot be speaking to the
witnesses about the content of their evidence. That's not
a prohibition on talking to them. It's just we're not
allowed to talk to the content. It's the inverse of the
earlier part of the rule that was in place during the
examination-in-chief, and I just want the record to show
that. Thanks.
--- Upon recessing at 11:53 a.m.
--- Upon reconvening at 1:05 p.m.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We're going to get
started again, please.

Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, I would
like to invite the next party to come into
cross-examination, that will be the Assembly of Manitoba
Chiefs, Ms. Joëlle Pastora Sala.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** All
right.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And the AMC has 23.5
minutes. Let's give them a moment to give you your 30
seconds.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Good afternoon,
Commissioners, Elders, family members, survivors. My name
is it Joelle Pastora Sala, I'm counsel to the Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs. And before I begin my questioning I just
wanted to thank the Blackfoot Nation as well as the Métis
Nation of Alberta Region number 3 for hosting us this week. I will likely have to leave right after my questioning today, but I mean no disrespect. I have -- I have a flight to catch.

Good afternoon, panel members, I want to thank you all for your presentations, as well as for all of your work. Just as counsel to NWAC, I -- I also feel uncomfortable with the term "cross-examination," so what I will be doing here today is respectfully asking you questions. And just for clarification, there's a few questions that I'd like to pick up on and areas of questions, and so my questions may not seem like they make much order because I'm kind of picking here and there from what my colleagues have done.

SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Ms. Montour, I'd like to start with you. I'd like to begin by asking you questions relating to the financial reporting requirements, and again picking up on that theme. Can you outline the types of information you have to provide in reporting?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can try, but my financial person is the one that does it, but I can -- I think I have a good sense of it.

One of the things that we always have to do
is we have to have our data, so they want to know the
number of safety plans that we use, that we did that month
or that quarter, the number of -- they ask a number of
specific statistic questions, so -- and that has to be
reported to our -- to our funder.

And, of course, they want to know any
variances, so any -- any surplus or any deficits. And they
want -- they want an explanation as to what the variance
was about, and they want to make sure that a certain
percentage is -- for example, under allocated admin, they
want that percentage always calculated into every -- every
report as well.

So basically you have your budget at the
beginning of your fiscal and then your -- that's divided
into your quarterly reports, and any variances within that
budget, they want to know details as to what that's about.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: And that
information that you've just outlined, do you outline it in
a form or what -- what does it actually look like, what
you're producing?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Excel spreadsheet. And
then -- and then what we have to do is we usually have to
do it on a secure -- like a One Key it's called or
a -- like, it's a secure email with the Ministry. And
often what happens is those cells don't work and it
causes -- it's a lot of -- you know, it's a lot -- it's a very tedious process and it's a lot of frustration for my admin people, as well as I'm sure for their admin people when things go wrong or when an agency does not have the proper -- the proper data. Because sometimes -- that was one of our problems, is our data, because we didn't have money to update our computer software, we weren't able to get these -- do these reports, so we had to spend money to make sure our equipment was operating -- updated so we could do these reports. That's for one funder.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And then we -- you know, we have our INAC funding as well, and that's -- again, there's three or four or five or six different funders that we have, so it's a lot -- it's a lot of work for our funders -- or to do our reports.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** And how long does that take?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I have -- I have employed two financial people. I have to employ two financial people to -- and they -- and they -- they're not only financial, they're HR, as well. So they're very, very busy. It takes a long time. It takes them most of their time doing the financial reports, and that's not even the audit, right?
MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: So how often is this reporting or audit or gathering of information taking place?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Quarterly reports.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: And when you speak about the frustration and challenges in reporting, what are the consequences of those barriers that you have identified?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, if we -- if we're in arrears in our reports, we could be put on the high risk. We could be designated as a high-risk agency. We could potentially lose our, you know -- so that's one of the -- what the Ministry has done is they've -- they've developed -- developed, like, this risk -- risk assessment for the agencies. And so if we're in arrears in our reports regularly, we -- we can go up in that risk. If we're, you know -- if there's a -- if we're not reporting properly, we can go up on that risk. I always -- you know, we used to say that they hold us more accountable than they do hospitals, and I believe that to be true, you know. So we -- and then, of course, if -- if we're -- we're designated as a medium or high-risk agency, that goes to their board of directors, right? And so we, as an organization -- we, you know -- we're basically said that we're high risk, and that's not good for a funder -- you
know, for a funder to designate an agency as a medium or high risk. We always want to be a low risk. So there's definitely consequences for us not -- not doing these reports on time.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Does being a high-risk agency affect whether or not you receive funding or the amount that you receive?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, we've never been a high-risk agency, so I don't know. But I think it -- it would definitely require a lot of Ministry intervention. So a Ministry would have to come in and -- and work with your -- you know, they'd have to make sure all their -- their checklists are -- are in place. But I -- I really do believe, you know, they've -- they do hold us more accountable than, you know, than they would a hospital. We kid around about that, but I really believe that to be true. And even when they have -- when our salaries were all -- there was a while back where the Ministry had -- I forget the word, but we couldn't go up in our salaries. Nobody could. And it wasn't because of the shelters. It was because of the high-paying salaries of, like, hospitals, and other -- other agencies, but we were all put in that same category where even though the -- we were the lowest salaried employees, we couldn't -- we weren't able to have any kind of raises because there was
basically a cap on all the salaries when it wasn't because of shelter workers. It was because of hospital staff, hospital workers, but we were put in that same category. So that's some of the challenges that we've dealt with in Ontario.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** And in addition to that barrier of a cap, I'm just wondering in terms of those challenges and frustrations, would you ever -- would funding ever be withheld from your shelter if you don't fill out a form properly?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I think, yes, definitely. Well, if we're not, you know -- and I -- I have a lot of compassion for, like I said, those I -- my sister INAC shelters who are solely funded by INAC or AHWS, Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, because I know they don't have the -- they don't have half these resources that we have up here. And -- or even a quarter. And their -- their -- their directors are busy on the floor, tending to clients, putting out fires, cooking supper, cleaning toilets, you know, and -- but -- and if they don't have those reports done or they don't -- those proposals done, then they won't get the funding, you know. So -- but, meanwhile, they're busy taking care of the actual people, the actual women in the shelter, the children in the shelter. And they don't have -- they don't
have an assistant like I do. They don't have a financial
person like I do. They have to do it all. And so I just
have so much compassion for them because I know that as bad
as we're saying it is, you know, I just know that
it's -- it's way worse for them because they don't have the
support.

**JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**

**Affirmed:**

**CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:**

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you. This
is for both Nakuset and Ms. Nepinak. I'd like to pick up
on one of my colleagues', Ms. Beaudin's questions, relating
to also reporting and give you each an opportunity to share
what you would recommend for a reporting process. I
believe Ms. Montour had the opportunity to recommend what
she would envision, but I'd like to hear from you on that
point.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay. Well, we report
directly to the Province of Alberta, which is a little bit
different from the INAC-funded agencies. And we, as well,
provide quarterly reports. And it is -- that is financial
reports, as well as program reports. And it -- the -- the
financial reporting comes under what we call Schedule B,
and that is a template that is administered by all the
shelters across the province. So there's -- there is a
standardized form, as well as our program report form is standardized, as well, although I have issues with the -- with the report, the program report, as well as around the financial because, again, I talk about the cultural peace and having Elders as an essential service. There is no line for that.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: M'hm.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: So that -- and then the other piece around program report is some of the questions that are asked during the exit process of women who are in the shelter. So there are namely three questions. One is how -- do you feel safer now that you've been in the shelter; are you able to provide safety for yourself and for your children. Where -- another question might be, were all of your cultural needs met.

Now, with that question, particularly around cultural needs, as I indicated, 65 percent of the women going into shelters in this province are Indigenous women. So most women -- and when you're in a shelter, there is that power -- power differential, right? And -- and she wants to protect herself and her children, so naturally she's going to say "yes." So the data that's actually going back to the Province of Alberta is -- is not accurate, as well, because what they come back and say, "Well, 99
percent of the women that you're serving through the
shelters are saying yes, that their cultural needs are
met." Rather, if they had asked the question around "do you
have access to the medicines, the Elders, the cultural role
models, to a trauma-informed counsellor, those kinds of
questions would be richer in terms of capturing the -- the
true experiences of -- of Indigenous women and children.
So there are issues with reporting, absolutely.

And I've advocated for -- for many years
to -- to have that -- to have that changed. And, of
course, I'm one voice. In Alberta, the majority of
shelters in this province are non-Indigenous. And so you
get one little brown face in there, and they don't listen
to us very well, you know? So our voices are drowned out
pretty quickly and watered down.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It's very -- it's very
challenging.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Nakuset, do you
have anything to add in terms of process you would
recommend?

**NAKUSET:** Okay. So Native Women's Shelter,
the -- we get funded through PSOC just for operations, but
I also have funding agreements with the Secretary des
affaires Autochtones, yes, DC, Employment Services, blah, blah. And so I don't know the whole acronym. Ville duMarial, the Burrow at Ville-Marie, Health Canada, INAC, and Justice Canada. So --

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** And do they all require reporting and different --

**NAKUSET:** All recesses --

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** -- reporting?

**NAKUSET:** They all require reporting. They all require financial reports, plus written reports, all at different dates, different -- like, I think for Health Canada, it's, like, three times a year. Everyone else is about four times a year. We have to actually have a list on the wall to say when is this due so we can let the staff know, which reminds me that I have to find out if my -- if my Iskweu worker did her report because I've got a notification.

So once you hand in the report, then they look at them, and then they decide whether or not they're going to pay you their next installment. I have some, like Justice Canada, where you have to ask for money ahead of time. So they don't pay you unless you ask them to pay you. Like, why? Why don't you just -- anyway. Whatever. So we have to remind Justice Canada to, hey, can you give
us the next installment so we can pay our -- our worker?

The -- the hard thing is that sometimes you do it all, and you still don't get paid. So I have a contribution agreement with Health Canada. I signed it on April the 1st. I'm still waiting for monies. I mean, I’ll get monies ‘till September, but I am still giving those services, so you have to be -- you know, I’m not going to let -- I can’t say to the women, sorry, we’re not going to have our psychologist in because Health Canada didn’t pay us. I’ll find other ways to make sure that they still get the services, and sometimes I tell psychologists, listen, the money is coming soon. Can you -- can you just wait? Still give the services? And it’s incredibly difficult, because let me tell you, if it was the other way around, if I do everything by the book and still don’t get paid, that would be unacceptable. If they asked me to -- like, I’m -- it’s like I’m being penalized even though I did everything. You understand what I’m saying?

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Yeah.

NAKUSET: You’re looking at me weird.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: No, I’m -- I’m -- I’m not meaning to look at you weird. I’m -- I guess I’m just hoping to hear from you in terms of what you would recommend for a process.

NAKUSET: With each of them?
generally, if you have any thoughts on -- on a recommended process.

NAKUSET: Wow. I think that they -- the funding agencies that I mentioned should be -- it should be reflective. What they expect from me, they should also expect from themselves. If I hand everything in in a timely fashion, with the written reports, the financial reports, then I should get paid for that. They should not be like, oh, well, I went on vacation, and then it was on somebody else’s desk, and it wasn’t processed properly, and yeah, by the end of summer you’ll get it. That kind of thing.

They -- we are not treated equally in what they ask and then what we produce and then they sort of are like, well, you just wait. I mean, I have horror stories where it’s a year that I haven’t gotten paid. A year. But I still give those services, so that’s why I said, we have to be, you know, super creative. And thank God that we can see a lot of community support in donations, because really, that has helped us to -- to give these essential services.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Thank you. Ms. Montour, coming back to you, over the course of the last week and even today, we’ve heard a lot about culturally appropriate services. When we look at culturally appropriate services, is it conceivable that there are
differences between and within nations and regions?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely, yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: And you have identified -- or you have testified about a nationally imposed directive to access the funding, agreed?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: A nationally imposed …

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Well, by your funders, an imposed system to access the funding.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: One consequence of the -- this imposition of a directive on how to access the funding, is it that you are unable to provide the services that you -- or that would be culturally appropriate within your nation for the individuals you serve?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I’m not sure I understand your question.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Is one of the consequences of the imposed way that they -- or information that they require from you, is one of the consequences of the -- not only the ways and the process but also what they’re providing you funding for, that you are unable to provide the culturally appropriate services that are culturally appropriate for your nation and the individuals you serve?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I still don’t
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: If you -- Counsel, if you could break it down step by step, please, sort of reframe the question?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Sorry. I can’t.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: That’s okay. So you -- you -- you indicated that the process that has been identified to access the service is something that has been imposed upon your shelter, correct?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: And you agreed that what is culturally appropriate may change within regions and nations.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Correct.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: So is one of the consequences of having an imposed system for accessing the funding that you are unable to -- to do what is culturally appropriate within your nation that you -- your -- the clients you serve or the individuals you serve would define as culturally appropriate?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: That we’re unable to do it? For all the nations, do you mean?

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: That you serve.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: That we serve.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Individuals.
MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: No. We -- we -- I think for us, we -- we -- we do our best to always go back to our basics, and where we started was in 1980s and we did in our -- our original needs assessment, and we heard from our community in the 1980s. They wanted to be serviced by our own people and they wanted services in their own way. So any kind of funding that we get, we always do that. We go back to our own -- our own culture and our own traditions and our own teachings. And I -- and I find that if we do that, we are -- we are always okay.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Can I ask, earlier, Ms. Montour, in answering Ms. Dunn’s question, you stated that the concept of shelter was imposed.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: On --

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: I’m wondering, how would you define the shelter or -- or maybe that’s not even the right word, but how would you define it from your perspective in your nation?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Okay. Well, we do the best we can to -- we work with the whole family. Like, that’s how we want to do family violence prevention work. It involves the children, the women, the men. We learned a long time ago, long time ago, that if we were just going to
work with the women and the children, the women are going
owners without their men. So we had to include the men.
As a matter of fact, our men’s program started as just a
pilot project way back in 1990, I believe. We’ve had the
men’s program, and back then, we used to get our hands
slapped by our sister shelters all the time because we were
working with men.

But we just stayed true to our values. We
stayed true to the, you know, to our traditions of our
people, that it’s not -- this problem is not just about
women. It is about, you know, we would hear from children.
Children would sometimes say, you know what, I’m -- I’m okay
with my dad, I’m afraid of my mom. We heard that. You
know, we -- so we were looking and we were hearing things
about sexual abuse a long time ago. We were hearing that
sometimes it wasn’t the men that were sexually abusing. We
were hearing that sometimes it was the women, too. So we
were -- we’ve been speaking those truths for 30 years.
People have not wanted to hear it, but we’ve -- you know
what.

So we -- we went back to our original
teachings and we talked about that duality and we talked
about that good-mindedness and that not-good-mindedness and
that we are all susceptible to it, whether we’re a child, a
teen, an Elder, a -- a woman, a man, you know, whatever.
We’re all susceptible to that not-so-good mind, and that we all have a responsibility. So I believe we -- we operate our shelter the way we need to at Six Nations.

Mind you, we don’t open it up to all men. I have to be clear with that. It is just for Six Nations men and New Credit men. So it’s not for all men to come to. We did that just so we can maintain some level of safety for the women, too. So it’s not for -- open to every man out there, but it -- mind you, we -- we have a population of over 13,000 people, so we -- so I guarantee you right now, there’s at least -- there’s at least four men in our shelter right now. And also -- as well as women. So that -- that’s the way we operate our -- our program. It’s more of a family. They call it, like, a family shelter.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That’s where I hear people calling it, but we don’t call it that. It’s just our shelter.

**MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA:** All three of you have referenced the many types of services that you provide in your shelter. I’m wondering if each of you could share information on the importance that you see in providing a variety of services within one space. Maybe I’ll start with you, Ms. Nepinak.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Certainly there can be
challenges around it. I mean, the whole concept of -- if I can just go back to that a little bit, around -- around sheltering is, from my perspective, at least, as a healing lodge. And within that healing lodge, we have the sacred space, and within this space, and that is to service the families that come into the shelter. And so as -- as a result of families coming in, there is a -- the -- the needs become identified, clearer and clearer, through our intake process. For example, mom may have -- and we have seen this, mom may have stage 4 cancer. You know, we had one incident where we had a -- a grandmother who came in with her two granddaughters, who were 14 and 16, from another province, and -- and she was very, very ill, and -- ambulance had to come and get her, you know, to the hospital. And -- and so the child support workers then kick in, and work with the -- the youth. And took the kids over to the hospital to see grandma, and -- and they were there to nurture and hug the kids as, obviously, they were very upset. And then to transport them back to the lodge. And we wanted to give this grand -- the grandmother the dignity of being able to make the decisions about her granddaughters.

I mean, policy would tell us otherwise that when there are children in the shelter that are abandoned for whatever reason, is that we would call Child Welfare.
We didn’t call Child Welfare. We brought in extra staff
to -- to stay with -- with the youth, the girls who were 14
and 16. Had we called Child Welfare, we know for certain
that those girls would have ran. And they would have been
on the streets, et cetera, et cetera. We know the story.
But, I think, it’s -- it’s very important to -- to create
that environment and that atmosphere that -- to the hope --
hopefully, as much as we can possibility to the individual
needs of that family. That -- that is critically important.
Did I answer your question? Or did I --

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Yes.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I did. Okay.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Thank you.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: I -- I notice I’m
over time. I’m wondering if the -- Ms. Montour and Nakuset
have the opportunity to answer the question, or if -- if I
should --

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you want to?

NAKUSET: I can. So we have a lot of
different, I guess, specialized staff because every time we
see an issue, we want to make sure that we have a -- a
qualified person to address that issue. So, you know, we
make sure that when we hire addictions workers that they
actually have a background working in -- in addictions. We
try to match the -- the service with the most appropriate
person because we have to help the people that come through
our doors, who we choose to help. And -- and every year the
-- the issues are changing. And we -- we keep growing
because nobody else is doing it. So we step up to the
plate.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Thank you.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: We just -- we have a --
a variety of services in a -- in a space. And I think
what’s important is that we all know our role and
responsibility.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: It’s a really big,
really big -- those two words mean a lot for any
Hodinohso:ní community, to know our roles and
responsibilities. And I find that we’re really good at --
we get things done. If we -- as long as we know what our
role is and our responsibility, we’re -- we’re -- we got
back to being very, like, living in the longhouse. We --
everybody knows what they’re supposed to do and what their
role is, and it gets done.

MS. JOËLLE PASTORA SALA: Thank you, all.

Thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Ms.

Pastora Sala. The Commissioners would like to invite up the
next counsel, Ms. Elizabeth Zarpa, on behalf of ITK. Ms. Zarpa will have 19 minutes, please.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Hi. Good afternoon.

My name is Elizabeth Zarpa. I’m counsel with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. I want to say thank you to the Blackfoot Nation and the Métis of Treaty 7 for allowing me to be here on their land.

NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: So I wanted to delve into this, and also thank you, everybody, for your time, and your expertise, and your wisdom, and lived experience. And I’m -- I’m going to gear my question predominately towards Nakuset. So I’m -- I know before, you mentioned, this is a touchy subject with regards to the experience of, sort of, Inuit women having their children taken away and, “It kills them.”

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Did you -- in that experience, in what you’ve seen from, say, an Inuk coming down to Montreal, and her child is taken away, what is the process from start to finish, in terms of if you wanted to emphasize the main points that she has to endure.

NAKUSET: Sorry. Say that again? When an -- when and Inuk woman comes to the city, now is she pregnant
before or -- already? It -- it gets really complicated because sometimes they come to the city and then they become pregnant, and it may not be a healthy relationship. And then they have to figure out what their going to do. So, unfortunately, what happens a lot, is they give birth to the baby and then they leave the hospital. And these babies go into Youth Protection right away. So I know -- is that helpful? Or you don’t want to hear that?

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** From that point --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- when they -- they go into Youth Protection --

**NAKUSET:** Yes.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- say -- say, the mother wants support in that process. Does she have access to civil law, common law, any type of support that’s understanding of where she comes from and the experiences she’s enduring?

**NAKUSET:** You -- you’re making it a very individual case. And it’s hard for me to say exactly because first, she has to want to fight to have that child back and then she has to access the services. So if she’s at the Native Women’s Shelter, and we know that she’s pregnant, and we know the social worker is going to try to take that baby, then we can begin the process where our
family care worker starts talking with the social worker, they’re creating a plan, they’re following through on the plan, and then she gets to keep the child at the shelter with the mom. And then we have outreach services so that -- that she can, you know, find an apartment and -- and be supported for as long as she wants to be supported.

So -- but if she doesn’t come to the shelter, then, you know, a lot of these kids go to -- to families. And I know one particular Mohawk woman, named Barbara McDonald (ph) from Kanesatake, and she has received all kinds of children, it’s unbelievable how this woman can take on so many. But she just does it with such love. You know, I remember she would come to a meeting and she’d have three, like, infants with her. And she’d be, like, you know, “It’s an honour to work with these babies.” You know, she’s doesn’t know how long she’s going to keep them. You know, maybe the mother is going to try to -- to, you know, have a relationship, and -- and fight the system. But she is all for that. I mean, she wants to support these babies, she wants to support the mothers. And that’s awesome that, you know, some of our people are trying to help, but we’re, sort of, the minority in that. I -- I don’t know if I -- do you have another question? I don’t -- I’m not sure if I’m answering it.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: So I wanted to, sort
of, get into the experience of -- thank you for providing that information, in your seeing these things occurs within the shelter. Is it a common occurrence that Inuit women usually don’t get their children back?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Or do they get them back?

NAKUSET: It is not the norm to get your children back. I was just at Youth Protection. I was explaining that. They make it so hard for us to get our kids back. They -- we have to jump through hoops, and then more hoops, and then more hoops. And I’m, you know, working again with Youth Protection and I’m going to be creating, like, a new program that they’re doing for the Black community. And I was saying, “Why aren’t you doing this for the Indigenous community? There are more kids in care and, you know, you said you’re going to follow the TRCs. Why aren’t you doing this?” I have to, like -- I have to almost bully people into actually doing the work. But I’ll do it.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: All right. And would you support the idea of a recommendation that the Province of Quebec create an inquiry into Inuit children being apprehended by Child Protection?

NAKUSET: Absolutely.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. Thank you. I
NAKUSET: It could be. I’m -- I’m not exactly --

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. And are some of the reasons to go down for, like, to go to university, or to go to college? You mentioned earlier, “To live the dream, where things are not as expensive.”

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And they go to hospitals, mental health --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And do you think that there would be the same level of Inuit in homeless shelters in Montreal, if there was equitable access to their own hospitals in their own territories, their own mental health centres, their own educational institutions, within their own homes?

**NAKUSET:** If they had in their own communities, they wouldn’t come down.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Great.

**NAKUSET:** They love their communities, and they’re proud of them, and, yeah.
MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. And -- and this was a part of the -- the exhibit, I think it was Exhibit 38, on housing needs and preferences of Indigenous people using community resources in Montreal, page 1.

NAKUSET: Page 1. Do I have that? Sorry.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Are you okay?

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. So it outlines that Indigenous people, particularly Inuit, are overrepresented among homeless people in Montreal, and on March 24th, 2015, about 10 percent of the 3,016 homeless persons who were surveyed were Indigenous, while they represent only .6 percent of Montreal's overall population. Of this 10 percent, about 40 percent were Inuit, while Inuit represent only 10 percent of the Indigenous population in Montreal.

Now, I wanted to understand whether in this experience of having a high number of Inuit coming to Montreal, and this level of homelessness, if there's any consultation or any type of agreement with, like, the Nunavik Government or the Nunavut Government to somehow bridge the gaps?

NAKUSET: I would not know the question -- or the answer to that.

I just wanted to mention something that I
haven't yet. In Quebec, when they're MedEvac'd, when the children are taken from the community to come to Montreal, the government doesn't think it's important to include the parent, so the children come by themselves. And a lot of them are super young and don't even speak English, and they show up at the hospital and they're crying for their mothers.

And this happens, it's been going on for 10, 15 years, the Gazette wrote an article about it, the government said, yeah, we should probably do something about it. They haven't done anything about it. So I'm thinking, okay, that's going to be the next thing I do. There's just so many -- and, you know, separating the mother and the child, or the family and child, it's been happening forever and it continues, so I just wanted to throw that out there, I just wanted to put that on the record.

**MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And are these children, when they come down, are they put into the Nunavik house, or do they stay in the hospital?

**NAKUSET:** No, this is like a regular hospital. It's like the children's hospital. And, like, the doctors can't communicate with the children, you know, they have to bring in an interpreter, and they're saying, what is she crying about? She's saying she wants her mom.
MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. Thank you for highlighting those things, I appreciate that. And so if there's an individual who comes from Nunavik and they're homeless and they decide, okay, this is the point in my life I want to go back to my territory, are there -- flying from Montreal to, say, Kuujjuak or Aupaluk or Iqaluit, those flights are in the thousands of dollars.

NAKUSET: M'hm, m'hm.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Are there programs available for individuals, whether it's by the regional government systems or the province that you're aware of, where if they want to go home and they're homeless, that's available?

NAKUSET: The Open Door, which is a day shelter in Montreal, is working with Makivik, and they are able to negotiate flights through Air Inuit to bring them back to their community. But I know that even that has been difficult if they don't have their identification because they're homeless, and they can't get on that plane.

It's -- you know, I know the staff there, they go over and above to try to -- to get those documents to support the people that want to go back to the community, to actually drive them to the airport. Like, there are people that are -- that are doing some of that work.
MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Great. And are you familiar, or do you know of any sort of Inuit shelters specific in Nunavik or Nunavut for individuals, say, who are homeless, they take a flight back, if that's available to them? If they wanted to go to into a healing lodge in their own home?

NAKUSSET: I know that -- I believe there are two Inuit shelters. I know Quebec Native Women, they have all the connections between all the shelters in Quebec. I can't tell you the names of them offhand. I know that there are Inuit addiction centres that we refer our clients to, and we help with flying them there or finding the transportation.

But in Montreal there's no Inuit specific shelter. We -- like I said, PAK has Inuit clientele, the Native Women's Shelter does, and sometimes they go to other non-Indigenous shelters.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And would you agree that Montreal needs a specific Inuit women's shelter?

NAKUSSET: Yeah, for men and for women, so we should have two.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay, thank you. And within these shelters that Inuit women in Montreal do have access to, do they have things like country food, like quaq or muktuk or char, seals, anything like that?
NAKUSET: At the Native Women's Shelter we get country food, and I think the Open Door also gets country food. I think the Native Friendship Centre does. I think all the shelters do. They -- yeah, they know who the person is to bring the country food down, or sometimes if you have the staff then they have the connection. Plus, you know, we also -- a lot of the organizations are also working with the clientele to develop their art with the soapstone sculptures. There's a lot more projects going on right now for that.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay, thank you. So this question is going to be to all three of you, and would you agree, Ms. Nepinak, Ms. Montour and Ms. -- or Nakuset, that individuals and children who come into shelters, safe houses and transition houses, are some of the most vulnerable people in Canadian society?

NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I would say so, absolutely.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And would you agree, all three of you again, that each shelter is common in some
of their struggles, but they are also diverse in their struggles based on their geographic location, as was emphasized on reserve, off reserve, main stream?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And between all three of you there is no representation of an Inuit shelter from Inuit Nunangat, so Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik or Nunatsiavut on this panel?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's true.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And within that, do you -- from what you've testified earlier, Ms. Montour, you mentioned that the northern experience is very different?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Did you want to highlight what you mean by north?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, where I'm thinking of north is just who is in our membership, and so I'm thinking of Fort Albany -- the remote communities, fly-in communities, like Fort Albany, Big Trout, even past Kenora in the Treaty 3 area, that's who I think of in the north. But I'm just thinking of our membership as far as ASO, but in terms of -- I definitely support the idea of
definitely there needs to be an Inuit shelter, specific
shelter. I've always wondered why there wasn't.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And in your idea of,
like, north within your membership area, what
were -- what's missing from hearing their particular
stories or their experience could be very different from
your geographic location because of where -- it's in the
north?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Definitely, yes.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. At this point I
want to put in a formal protest that there's no
representation of Inuit shelters from Inuit Nunangat, and
in that there's a huge gap in the information that's being
shared here today, and the Inuit specific experience of
women and children and vulnerable people living far north.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's been noted.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: It's duly
noted, thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's duly noted,
thank you.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: That's all I have
today. Thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you,
Ms. Zarpa.
Commission Counsel would now like to invite Ms. Julie McGregor on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations to do her cross-examination. Ms. McGregor has 23 and a half minutes.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Good afternoon, Commissioners and panel members. My name is Julie McGregor and --

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you just wait a moment, Julie, sorry. We're just trying to set the time for you.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Okay.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. Thank you for your patience. I think Mr. Registrar had to step out for a minute.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** That's okay.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I would say go ahead. You have extra seconds.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** My name is Julie McGregor and I'm Algonquin from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, and I represent the Assembly of First Nations here today.

I'd like to thank Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak for sharing their time with the AFN today, and I'd also like to thank all the panel members for all of the great work they do. Ms. Nepinak, you mentioned the war on Indigenous women, and I have to say, after listening to all
of your evidence today, I am so glad and so proud to have
warriors like yourselves on the frontlines of that war.

In terms of my questioning today, I want to
begin by directing my questions to Nakuset, Ms. Nepinak,
and then Ms. Montour.

NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Nakuset, you said -- you
spoke about your frustration, and -- and it really came
through in your evidence, about always having to educate
institutions like the police, and you provided an example of
McGill University, on the circumstances of Indigenous people
and that the onus is always on Indigenous people to -- to
educate the public. Based on your interactions with these
institutions, why do you think there is a lack of knowledge
out there about these things? Is it just plain ignorance?
Is it resistance to change? Is it because there’s a public
perception that these issues are not important? Or is it
just plain racism?

NAKUSET: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Good.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Do you think in -- do
you think that the government institution that you had
interactions with perpetuate negative stereotypes about
Indigenous people and that those stereotypes result in a lack of public support for resolving these longstanding issues?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: One of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and I’m not going to get into the -- the TRC report or anything, was that the history of residential schools should be taught in schools so that there is public education. In a similar way, what are some of the more concrete and practical ways to educate public service providers and governments, specifically about -- about providing services to Indigenous people?

NAKUSET: In my area?

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: M’hm.

NAKUSET: You mean in Quebec?

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Yes, in Quebec.

NAKUSET: There’s so much. You know, like I said, you know, Quebec has 11 nations and most service providers don’t even know -- if they get three of them right, that’s amazing. So there’s so much that they need to be educated on, but that’s, you know, cultural norms. I mean, if we were to put out, like, stereotypes of Indigenous people and just hand that around and -- and see if they’re like, oh, that’s a stereotype, you mean it’s not true?
There are so many misguided -- sometimes I don’t even think that they’re -- they mean to be cruel. They -- they -- they just don’t know any better. So I -- like I said, I -- I’m good with educating as much as I -- as I can, but I think there’s also responsibility for people to educate themselves, and that seems to be a real effort for them to do.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So it should be the government and the service providers educating themselves.

**NAKUSET:** I think everyone should be. But you know, I mean, the TRCs, that was why they was created, the, you know, the 94 recommendations were supposed to be for institutions. So I think that when you start a job and it’s your first day and you’re filling out the paperwork, all of a sudden, the TRCs will be there. Can you read them? You’ve read them? Can you sign the paper at the end because you know them? Okay. Feel free to apply them as well. I think that’s what the whole purpose is. But who is going to force these institutions to do that? I thought that’s what the whole purpose was, but no one’s forcing them. So I guess that’s another thing on a wish list, of having the TRC enforcers.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So would it be the TRC or what -- it could be, you know, the governments themselves? Like, how do they provide funding to service
providers? Shouldn’t that be part of their -- their
agreements, their funding agreements? They somehow enforce
this level of public education?

**NAKUSET:** So you’re saying that governments
should have funding so that they teach themselves about
First -- Indigenous issues?

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** No, I’m saying that when
you say, like, you have a -- say you have a child welfare
agency or you have the police services --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- they receive money as
well, and that --

**NAKUSET:** Yeah.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you know, but maybe
that funding should be conditional upon them showing that
they’re doing that.

**NAKUSET:** Yes. I like that.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** All right. I was going
to ask you about which -- all of the levels that you talked
about. You should -- you said there should be training at
all levels and I wanted --

**NAKUSET:** M’hm.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you to kind of
enumerate them, but I think you just mean at all levels
anywhere, right?
NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: In terms of the

training?

NAKUSET: Yeah. Everywhere.

JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: That’s great. Thank

you. Josie?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes?

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: And can I call you

Josie?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Actually, can I call the

panel all of -- by your first names, if that’s okay? Thank

you. In your evidence, I recall that you spoke about

Minobimaatisiwin, and -- and you said it’s the good life.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Can you explain a little

bit for the panel what that entails?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, Minobimaatisiwin

is living a good life. And -- and within that good life,

you have your fundamental -- your beliefs, your actions, how

you interact with other people, what your home fires are

like, how you look after the people around you, extending

kindness, empathy, acceptance. And Minobimaatisiwin means
all of those things in a very broad context. And so it’s important, and it’s -- it’s -- it -- it’s incumbent on us as individuals, I think, to -- to -- to live that good life by reflecting often on those teachings and -- and -- and the role modeling that we received in our lives. And I think about the -- the grandmothers, I think about the great-grandmothers and the many grandmothers that were in the communities that -- that demonstrated and role modelled Minobimaatisiwin in my community and how I would like to emulate that behaviour today to -- to be -- to live that good life. That’s what I believe it is.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So Minobimaatisiwin is a holistic principle in your --

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- your belief. Yes.

So in the spirit of that, would you agree that funding for shelters needs to be sufficient to include holistic programming for the individuals, which includes -- which would -- could include childcare, support for Elders, cultural programming, life skills, nutrition, everything that would affect that individual who’s coming into the shelter?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** You mentioned also in your evidence how important it is to have staff who know the
ways of our people.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And that really struck me, because I think it’s an important point, because Indigenous people really do have a unique way of relating to each other. It’s not always obvious to people who don’t interact with us or don’t have that experience. And so would you agree that there’s a significant need to have Indigenous people providing the culturally appropriate services to Indigenous people?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely. And I do believe that that is the only way to -- to move towards healing and wellness, is to have people with the lived experiences coupled with the educational experiences and -- and the ways of -- the traditional ways as well.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And we -- we heard, and I -- and I appreciate I’m not going to try to get you to talk about other panels or whatever that happened during the hearing, but we did hear a lot about requirements for recruitments, training, and educational requirements as being obstacles for Indigenous people to, you know, to receive the credentials to do the kind of work that is needed. Do you think that governments and service providers are -- should partner with First Nations and Indigenous communities to train staff and to perhaps look at
alternative measures for -- for credentials for people who
want to work in this area, Indigenous people who want to
work in this area?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, and I think
that should have happened decades ago. Not today, but
decades ago. I -- I -- I think it’s very, very critical
that we have a curriculum developed by Indigenous folks to
-- to develop a training manual, to develop -- whether it’s
a university curriculum or a high school curriculum to
prepare people for the work that is ahead. But also, with -
- in conjunction with our Elders as well, with -- with
ceremony, to prepare the people for it. Because there’s --
there -- there needs to be a lot of strength in the work
that we’re doing. It is very vicarious work, and quite
often, we see very high-risk situations, and so we need to
be prepared on many different levels to react to those
situations when they come upon us.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And in -- and when you
have the circumstances where you hire somebody who may have
the education, may have the training, may have the
credentials, but doesn’t quite understand how Indigenous
people relate to each other, you know, but then you have, on
the other side, you have a person who is, you know, very
familiar with all of the issues, but perhaps doesn’t have
the credentials to provide the services that you need in
your -- in the shelters. Do you think that, you know, that those specific circumstances that where you weigh education verses life experience almost, I guess you’d say, do you need -- does that need to be adjust for the circumstances for Indigenous people?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I think, what we do at Awo Taan, is we coupled the -- you know, you have some that are very, very culturally, very, very strong, and some who are -- may not be as strong but have excellent advocacy skills, so we try to pair people together, and I know we -- there was mention that quite often people have to work alone, but we’re quite lucky we don’t -- that doesn’t happen for our organization. There’s also a requirement by our funders, at least for the provincial funders, that when we apply for dollars we have to send our job descriptions with our minimum requirements to -- for -- for each of our positions, and they’ll sometimes ask for resumes, they’ll ask for criminal security clearance checks, as well as our child welfare cheques every three years as well.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M’hm. Do you think that governments need to invest, either provincially or Federally, do they need to invest in building more capacity within First Nations in terms of providing training and education for Indigenous people to work within their communities? Or in urban areas, as well?
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely, and I -- that should have happened, again, decades ago.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: So I just want to move quickly to, you provided in your evidence you discussed the Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness, which you -- you wrote.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: If you had the resources, and a lot of this comes down to resources we've heard that through your evidence today. You need more money.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: If you had the resources to update the framework and to expand it, what would you like to see done?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, I'd certainly like to -- it is a 10-year document, and as it -- it needs revisions. We need more recent practices. We need -- we need to find out what people are doing across the country to put that in our manual, as well as we need current research as to what -- what some of the trends are. We some of our data, but we also need to go back to some of our Elders to talk about some of those definitions around -- you know, I talked about the definition of healing yesterday. I talked about Indigenous ways of knowing. I talked
about colonization. It’s time we -- we take that -- that
-- those words and -- and build them to be part of the
mainstream discourse as well or discussion.

So we need mainstream shelters to begin to
use our language around healing, around ways of knowing
Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, so that Indigenous women are
better served in -- in shelters.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that that
probably like a practical recommendation right there? Is
where you take a document, like the framework, and build it
into, you know, non-Indigenous service providers --

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- manuals, guides,
books.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It is -- it is available
to non-Indigenous service providers, and I actually took it,
when we did the manual, to a provincial network. And again,
there is the -- sometimes the lack of belief in Indigenous
ways. As -- as I mentioned earlier, I sometimes, you know,
I’m the only Indigenous shelter, where there may be, you
know, 30 other non-Indigenous shelters, and my voice gets
drowned out very quickly.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M’hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so people don’t
listen or pay attention or they’re just not interested. I
I have to say that a few years ago that the province was doing a database, and I had to fight vigorously to have Indigenous women included in -- in the count, and some of the comments, you know, from other mainstream shelter directors were, Well, why should we count Indigenous women? They don’t get nothing anyway, kind of thing. And -- and in another comment that I got is, Why aren’t Indigenous women -- what is wrong with Indigenous women that they can’t fit into regular programming? And -- and I’m trying to articulate, here’s why, you know, there is a history, there is colonization, there’s materialistic policy, there’s racism. All of those things that I bring up, but people haven’t had that will to -- to do it or that thinking to do it, and so many mainstream shelters continue to struggle on how to work with Indigenous women.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And do you think that perhaps Indigenous women when they go to a mainstream shelter, because of that perception, are somehow turned away from them and told, Oh, you have to go to the Indigenous shelter or some other service that’s provided.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. Yes, and I do recall, you know, one Indigenous woman being told to leave another shelter here in Calgary, and she was told to leave with her “dope”, which was actually her sacred smudge that was trying to use, so they kicked her out. And another
woman was put out in the rain, you know, with her -- with her stroller and her baby. I can’t remember what the situation was, but there are stories that -- that put Indigenous women into very dangerous situations, and we need to pay attention to those stories because this is the day-to-day reality. These are the boots on the ground that are telling us here is the situation for us today.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Are there any resources for the Commissioners to draw upon when you -- you’re talking about these stories, and you’re saying, you know, people need to hear this, and I think the Commissioners probably need to hear these stories as well.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** What resources could they draw on for that?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, certainly increased resources for Indigenous women’s shelters. I think specific shelters that service women from an Indigenous lens, from an Indigenous framework, and to develop -- further develop the concepts of healing lodges because there is a certain amount of stigma when it comes to shelters as well. Who wants to go into a shelter? Well, she’s a battered, you know, she wants to go in there. And there’s a lot of labelling that goes on.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M’hm.
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: You know, and there’s --
I talked a little bit about assessments yesterday, about,
you know, he’s the batterer, she’s the battered women. And
so that whole language needs to change as well.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Thank you.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: It needs a whole new
reset is really what I’m saying. We need to build it, you
know, let’s break it down and let’s build it from the ground
up, and let’s bring in our Elders, our traditional knowledge
keepers, our wisdom keepers, our people with a lived
experience, and -- and let’s bring in our academics and our
researchers. but together I believe we -- we can build
lodges that are welcoming, and that do promote healing and
wellness in a very positive way.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Thank you.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Miigwetch.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Miigwetch.

SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:
CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Sandra, I just have a
couple of questions about -- you raised in your evidence the
challenges of operating a shelter on reserve, and I’d like
to explore some of that. But I also -- I don’t want to go
over -- my friend from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs went
over the funding issues, and -- and I know you -- you spoke
quite passionately about that, and I think that you were
talking about, you know, the life of a contribution
agreement. Basically, you -- you've provide a proposal, you
wait a long time to get an answer, you wait long time to get
a funding agreement, and then by the time you are getting
the money you've already had to have done half the things
you did in your proposal. And then, you know, there's a --
there's a chance that you don't get the time to do
everything you have in your proposal, and there's a
possibility for a clawback of those funds, right? Have you
ever experience that, where you’ve had to give back money to
the government?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We really try not to do
that, but that has happened. That's like -- that hurts with
everything I -- you know, to have to give that money back,
but we have had to -- I'm thinking of one time, we did have
to give money back because by the time we were approved for
funding for our parking lot it was bad weather, and so we
couldn't. And of course, April 1, March 31st is when
everything has to be done. By the time we had -- were
approved for it, it already started snowing for our parking
lot -- to redo our parking lot, and because it snowed all
the winter and right to -- into, you know, end of March, we
weren’t able to do the parking lot, so we had to send that
money back.
That was probably one of the few times we have had to send money back, but we -- we’re really creative. I think we, you know, we’ve become very good at working with a system in doing the best we can to not have to send money back but to make sure those objectives get fulfilled. You know, we’ve -- we have to be. We have to -- otherwise I’d be sending money back all the time, so, you know, we have to be very creative in how we do it, and so that they’re happy with -- they get their needs met, and we also get the work done too.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that -- different models say multi-year funding agreements, would help out in those circumstances?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. That would be great. Like I said, I spend -- the majority of my time, I spend looking for money. And I know that last year because of our government and, you know, with the -- with the prime minister wanting new things for -- for Indigenous people, there were a lot of opportunities for -- for, you know, a lot of proposals for Indigenous people, so I was very fortunate last year. But now, you know, I had a staff that was just completely burned out saying, “Sandy, no more proposals, no more, because it” -- you know, but they’re also just short term, right.

They’re short term and now it’s the reports,
so we're all stressed out writing all those reports and, again, it's just short-term project money that's going to be clawed back after it's done.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** I'm going to throw this out to all three of you, and you -- you're welcome to answer, any of you, if you -- if you feel compelled to do so, but what's easier to navigate, the provincial funding system or the federal one?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I've had experiences with both, and I find that the provincial is much easier, and here is the reason why. Because at one time I applied for funding through INAC, through their -- through the Urban Aboriginal Initiatives, and I waited ten months to get paid for a program that had been running. We still have to pay bills for that program, right.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So ten months later, we finally get the money. But in the meantime, they still need your quarterly reports. And they -- and they're very good at reminding you, you have to bring in your quarterly reports, even though they haven't given you any money.

**MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Yeah. Thank you.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** For us, it would be -- for me it's the federal was much easier than the
province. We have a really good relationship with the
federal system, our federal program supervisor, and it's
more of a -- she will even text me if she needs stuff. So
it's more face to face. It's a relationship, I believe,
that we have with our federal system. Whereas -- and it's
a lot easier and I find her to be very understanding when
there's tragedy and when there's loss, and she knows
reports are going to be late, and she will say just get it
done whenever you can. So I find that the provincial
system to be much more complicated than the federal system.

NAKUSET: I find them both difficult. What
I like is the private, like the McConnell Foundation.
Yeah, I think going with private foundations reporting is
easier. If you have a surplus, they will meet with you and
they will be, like, “Okay, so how do you want to spend the
rest of this money?” It's awesome.

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: Well, I'm just about
out of time. I kind of wanted to go further and discuss
child welfare and some of the risks that mothers,
Indigenous mothers, have when they --

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm sorry, I don't
think you will have time to --

MS. JULIE MCGREGOR: No, I know, I'm just
finishing up. And I wanted to explore that, so perhaps
maybe one of my colleagues might -- might get into that.
But for now I just want to say (speaking in Native language), Sandra. Well, no, actually I'm going to do this right, (speaking in Native language), Josie; (speaking in native language), Nakuset; wela'lin, Sandra. Thank you.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. So the Commission counsel would like to invite Families for Justice, represented by counsel Susan Fraser, to come up next for cross-examination. Ms. Fraser has 23 and a half minutes.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Good afternoon, Commissioners, Elders, panel members. Members from the territory, thank you for having us and I'm grateful to them for receiving us and I'm grateful for my Indigenous friends in the Indigenous bar who have been here with me and who have been guiding me and teaching me.

So I'm here today on behalf of 20 families from different parts of Canada, including Stacey Duchaine who is with me today, who is -- Stacey Duchaine Anton (ph) who is originally Hodinohso:ni from Six Nations, but who is happy to be residing in Blackfoot territory and enjoying the friendship and support of the people here.

We have other people, and part of our group, the family, the Tashina General who is from Six Nations who unfortunately was murdered. Linda John, who -- Helena
Rivera who was killed as a result of family violence in Buffalo, New York. So I come here with the greetings of the families who have been watching.

And, Ms. Nepinak, I can tell you that it was hashtag Josie rocks yesterday as they watched online, so --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Thank you.

JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:

MS. SUZAN FRASER: So I want to start then, Ms. Nepinak, with you, with what is Exhibit 46 to these proceedings, I think page 20, which are the recommendations from the Round Table from February 2015. And I'm -- so -- I don't know if you have that document with you?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I do.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. I just wanted to kind of do a little check and see what of those recommendations are presently outstanding?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Very likely all of them.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. Well, it looked --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: It requires money and resources.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. So recommendation 1: (As Read)
To continue to support and follow-up with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Calgary and surrounding area.

Do you feel that there is sufficient funding to do that at present?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No, there is not.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 2:

(As Read)

Create advocacy and healing environments for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Scarcely. We have done a couple, but, again, resources are nil.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 3:

(As Read)

Create a sacred place for people to gather, reconcile and begin the healing process.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** And when this recommendation was drafted, did you have an idea of what that looked like.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, we did. We -- we thought about a gathering place, whether it was a room,
whether it was a monument by the bridge, whether it was an
honour wall somewhere in a location that people can visit.
So those were some of the things we thought about.

   MS. SUZAN FRASER: A place, and I'm
   imagining, considering everything we've heard about, how
tenuous it is as an Indigenous person to occupy space?

   MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

   MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. A place where you
can go where you're not threatened, where you have a right
to be, where you're not going to be hassled, where --

   MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's right.

   MS. SUZAN FRASER: -- you will be welcomed?

   MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's right, and that
we can leave a monument that is not open to graffiti or
even, you know, destruction, to be -- to have a space that
is respected.

   MS. SUZAN FRASER: And what's -- what is the
holdup, just in terms of --

   MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: We don't have the money
or the resources. We have dreams, we have hopes, we -- and
we'd like to see this place happen, this healing. I mean,
for many of us who have missing and murdered, and the ones
that have never been found, where do you go for that? To
go place a rose, a flower, to take a meal to that spirit, a
cup of coffee and you just sit quietly and meditate and
talk to that person's spirit. There is no place in Calgary for us to do that.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** And do you know in the work that you've done of other places across the country where an Indigenous person might go in the way that you've just described so well?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think there are some places. I think Winnipeg has in their -- in the -- the City of Winnipeg has through Oodena, they call it, and it's a monument for missing and murdered Indigenous women, so I think they do have a place. They also have the Thunderbird House. And there are other -- I believe other friendship centres across the country that provide space, but it's notice specific to -- to that -- to the sacred place to remember missing and murdered women.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay, thank you. I'm just going to -- I think we could probably spend a lot of time on each one of these recommendations.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** But you understand by now the constraints of the process, so when I move to the next one, it's not because I don't think there's more to hear on that topic.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay. So just if we can
look at to create a family -- to create a provincial
Aboriginal advisory committee on family violence, have you
had any success at creating that?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Actually, we did several
years ago. And I'm going back, and so it's going to be
very difficult to try to articulate this because back in
19 -- not '78, but 1997, I believe, was the Aboriginal
Round Table on family violence and bullying, and at that
time, an Aboriginal advisory committee was established, and
the new province came in and it was done. They just kind
of wiped it off the -- off the radar and it no longer
exists. Part of the repercussions of that is the provincial
framework on family violence and bullying is silent of
Indigenous women’s concerns and issues and recommendations.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: So when we look to
recommendations like this that require some political --
well, when -- when the funding for that is attached to an
agency that’s funded a government which changes, then the
-- you’re put in jeopardy --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely, yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay, and I’m going to
deal with funding on a more broader basis in a minute.
Wanda talked about Recommendation 5, Inclusion in the
Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A Framework in Family
Violence -- about a document. So has -- have you been --
has the Indigenous perspective been included in that
document?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we haven’t, although
I’ve advocated several times, and my Board has advocated.
I’m going to give you an example of just how that works
here in Alberta. I mean, it just seems that, you know, you
can paint a pretty picture of -- of -- you know, of all
these investments, so to speak, but we -- and all the
shelters in Alberta are -- are funded provincially with --
other than the First Nation shelters. And there are funded
agencies that -- that -- I believe by excluding Indigenous
women because -- because we don’t pay a membership or we
don’t have the monies --

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Yes.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- in our budget to pay
a membership, so therefore we’re excluded from the
provincial map. There is a map of -- you can click on and
then you reach a shelter. We’re -- we’re excluded from
that. We are excluded from the 1-8666 (sic) number, the
toll-free number. If I was to sit in my shelter from my
boardroom and call the 1-866 number, I would be directed to
another shelter in the city.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Wow.
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: So this is -- this is what happens. And -- and the membership fees are -- are, you know, more than $2,000. And when you’re -- when you don’t have that kind of money or you’re trying to leverage your -- your areas, other places.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. So recommendation directed at getting around that would be appreciated, I’m sure. So I’m going to skip Recommendation 6, since it goes to the calling of a National Inquiry. Recommendation 7: Creating culturally appropriate services for families who are impacted. And you give examples of court support attendance, liaison, police and families, and we’ve heard from Nakuset how useful and crucial having somebody who can put a foot in both worlds for an Indigenous person.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That’s right.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Does that funding or those positions created?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: They haven’t been. I -- I have to say that Victim Services in Calgary has -- they had -- they don’t exist for Indigenous people. And there have been many cases in the last few years where if we had a strong non-police led Victim Services support, I think families would have been looked after very well.
MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. So even a separate dedicated fund for delivery of victim services for Indigenous people by Indigenous people?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely. I mean, there was one woman whose -- whose daughter was killed and she went to Victim Services and -- and the guy said to her, Well, how -- how do you expect us to help you? Rather than using a trauma-informed --

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. So I’m going to -- I’m going to skip the last two recommendations. Maybe you can just tell me a yes or no because I want to get to a couple of other questions. Do you fell that recommendation 8 has been met?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. And recommendation number 9 to continue to -- to provide --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: No, okay. And I’m sorry for the people who are following along and don’t have the report in front of them, but I’m not reading it out. So I just want to talk a little bit -- we’ve talked a lot about problems. I want to talk a little bit more about what good looks like.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. Because I think
the shelter system provides such a model of what good can look like. So -- and using the -- let me just see if I heard correctly, (speaking in Native language).

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: (Speaking in Native language).

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. I’m going to work on that. Living a good life, but just how to do that, because as I understand it, the shelter exists -- is the shelter -- your time in the shelter limited. If you come to a shelter, is it an indefinite period of time that you could stay?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, no. No, it’s not. The -- at least in Alberta it’s 21 days. But we have had families stay for 30, 40, 50 days, depending on their circumstances. So -- but the time is limited, so -- and this is really unfair to the families who come into the shelters because I believe we expect that miracles are going to happen. One, she’s coming in usually with two to three kids. She’s very traumatized and so are the children. She may have not slept for days.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: She may be coming in with injuries that we can’t see, and so are the children.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: She may have not eaten
for two days, and so we expect her to keep her life

together, to live in a -- a somewhat structured environment

with a whole bunch of other strangers and to -- and to keep

her mental health together. We expect her to find income

support. We -- we also expect that housing supports will

be met within 21 days, which is just not acceptable for --

for the issues that they’re coming in with.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER**: Right. And -- and those

issues may be childhood sexual trauma --

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK**: Absolutely. It’s all of

it. It’s --

**MS. SUZAN FRASER**: It -- you’ve -- you’ve --

yeah, okay. You’ve -- you’ve explained the challenges and

the impact -- the war injuries, essentially. So in order

to help that person live a good life and transition from

either the family violence, the sexual trauma, the

addiction issues that they’re suffering or even

transitioning out of a life where the money that has

sustained them has come through their own exploitation?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK**: Right.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER**: So are there programs in

Alberta, in Ontario or in Quebec that will help people live

safely with the support of a healing lodge, transition

through life skills development, also career skills

development?
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: M’hm. There’s parts of it. I think it’s very fragmented. I mean, we -- we -- we offer support through our outreach and follow-up program, and we do that up to six months. But quite often within that six months we -- depending if -- if the woman and children will -- will go back to -- to their home community, and then they may come back into Calgary, and there may be homelessness involved. There may be another pregnancy, there may be addictions or there may be a very serious illness as well.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. So what would -- what would good look like in that second stage where you go beyond the shelter and the outreach in terms of that second stage transitional housing and longer term, sort of, connected with a skill development?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, I think recognizing that -- that healing process is a very long process. I mean, individuals heal at various -- at -- at different -- different rates and times, and -- and having longer terms supports indefinitely, a minimum of a year, possibly a maximum of four years where we have all of those things that we’ve talked about already around the -- the supportive counselling, the peer support, the trauma informed, the historical grief supports, the -- the Elders, the -- the trauma informed psychologists, health supports,
justice supports. I think all of those areas need to come
together and do this wrap-around service for mom and the
children on a very long-term basis. And I think it should
be mom that should tell us that I no longer need your
supports where she can begin to shed some of those
supports, because quite often funding is also restricted to
you will provide six months to this family and after they
must exit. And so we no longer, at times, can provide
those supports to families.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. And that six-
month, like the aging out process of child welfare --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: -- it’s fairly arbitrary
in terms of whether the person’s ready for it or not?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. That's correct.

SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously

Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. I’m just going to
ask, Ms. Montour, what you think good looks like in terms
of helping women go from shelter existence. And you’ve got
more capacity within your model --

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: And maybe to how to build
on that.
MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: We have our Gayenawahsra program, which is, they are helping themselves. It’s a Cayuga word, and that’s our second stage housing. So individuals apply to reside there and they can live there for up to two years, and even then they can apply for an extension. And they have -- there is a life skills worker that works with them as well as a -- a child and youth worker that works with their children. So there’s after school groups that happen. There’s life skills groups that happen. There’s parenting groups that happen. There -- it’s in a -- it’s not -- it’s a -- it’s in a -- they have their own community, so they are really educated on the risks of each other. And who’s -- who’s the risk -- the person to be aware of, and they monitor each other. Because of staff are only there until, you know, they’re not there overnight. Like, it’s not a secure place, like shelter is, so it’s more independence. And it’s what -- that is what it’s geared to, is helping people to help them find employment. Getting them hooked up with the employment agencies within the community, whether it’s going back to school. We’ve had -- we’ve had people that have been very successful in that program, that actually went on to graduate with university degrees, and working very, very -- doing very well today because of that program.
MS. SUZAN FRASER: And there are a number of universities within proximity to Six Nations that would allow -- universities and colleges that would allow people to make that transition?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes. We have our own university, Six Nations Polytech, right within the community.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: I didn’t -- I actually didn’t know that.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M’hm.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Thank you. And so that would help because you -- there’s a -- there’s a skill -- there’s a culturally appropriate service within the community --

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: -- to help women transition. Okay, so just speaking of culturally appropriate, the next -- and I’m not meaning not get to you, but I’m running short on time. Would -- do you think that in terms of your federal and provincial partners, that Indigenous cultural competence should be a job requirement, like, bilingualism? Maybe -- sure.

NAKUSET: Sorry.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. So it’s not just
about checking off a form after the day, and say, “Yeah, I’ve read the policy.” It’s actually you -- in order to have any contact with Indigenous people, you have to meet a certain culturally competent threshold?

NAKUSET: Yeah. You should have some, kind of experience. You know, you should have maybe done a stage somewhere in a Native Friendship Centre, or you know, there -- I’m sure there’s other indicators too. But, yeah, it should be.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: And that training, and that standard of cultural incompetence [sic] should be led by Indigenous people?

NAKUSET: Yes.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: All right. And, you know, white people would be, like, institutes. So I’m thinking about -- if you had -- you’ve talked a lot -- of -- a lot of you we don’t get to see each other. We don’t get to go to conferences, there’s no funding for that. We don’t have a -- an opportunity to build our knowledge together, but to have a centre for excellence, or to lead the requirements for cultural competence in some recommendation, would you support? I -- I’m kind of thinking out loud here, but just in terms of -- you don’t -- you’re doing -- when you’re doing all of the front-line work, you don’t have an opportunity to create the
policy or make the demands. But to actually have the -- a -- a centre to create the kind of training programs that people who are working with Indigenous people should take, that should -- is that something that you would support?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**NAKUSET:** Yes.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

**MS. SUZAN FRASER:** Okay. Let’s see. Four minutes, okay. So just coming back, Nakuset, what do you think, and you heard my questions about transitioning from the shelter experience. And what you’ve described in terms of shelter is much beyond what a person normally thinks of in terms of shelter, so I’m -- which is just a roof over your head. You’ve described a roof over our head. You’ve describe someone to be there negotiating with police, to doing all of this wrap-around service for your clients. So -- but beyond that, in terms of the transition for when people leave your shelter, what would good look like for you?

**NAKUSET:** Good would look like they are -- find affordable housing, that they have the career of their choice, that they have their children, that they’re happy, that they have a purpose. That would -- that’s what good looks like. Now, how you get them there, you know, is
-- you know, there are many steps and there are many
different services because everyone is different.

Everyone’s needs are different. It’s -- there’s not really
one quick fix. And, I think, that’s why, you know, the
shelter we have so many different kinds of staff, depending
on what their needs are. Yeah.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. And just, sort of,
picking up that from the funding perspective, would it
assist you, if you were to flip the funding model on the
head and say -- and to say, for it to be -- instead of you
saying, “I’m going to get $70,000 from Health Canada, and
I’m going to $50,000 from Corrections because the work we’re
doing is keeping people out of the jail system. And then
I’m going to get some from INAC and some --” Would it
assist you to say, “This is how much money that I need.”

That the funding process changed, where the Federal and
provincial and municipal partners got together and said,
“We’re going to have one funding stream because people want
to do the work. And then we’ll fight about who -- who’s
accountable for it.” That would probably help you?

NAKUSET: That would be great in a perfect
world.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. Sandy’s nodding
her head.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.
MS. SUZAN FRASER: Josie’s nodding her head.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yeah.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: And I’ve seen from those -- my own work and in -- and in non-Indigenous organization, not-for-profit, that those funding proposals come completely at random. And you get notice that you have to -- “We’ve got this money you can apply for, but we need your proposal within 48 hours.”

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: You -- have you all experienced that?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yeah.

NAKUSET: Yeah.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes. Absolutely.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Right. And so you might be in the middle of some crisis, you might be in the middle of some initiative, but in order to access this extra $30,000, $10,000, you got to pull something together within a very short period of time.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

NAKUSET: That’s usually more the norm.
MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. And just -- if there’s anything else you would like to say, in terms of building up either the capacity of your organization or the women you serve, of what would be assistance, I would be interested to hear from you, starting with Ms. Nepinak.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, I think I would like to see second stage because, quite often, women who leave the -- the Lodge may end up coming back. Although, it -- and -- and the presenting issue may be around homelessness as opposed to violent situations. So I believe that if we were able to -- to help her transition through a transition home, that we would have greater success as well.


MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I would like to see more focus as well on the children and youth. You know, we do have a -- a youth -- eight-bed youth residential facility, also, under us for individuals who -- children and youth have been impacted by family violence and sexual abuse. And, I think, there -- there needs to be more attention to children’s mental health residential services. Because right now, when the government gives money to mental health services, it goes to the day programs and -- and we get left out of it. So they need to really focus on the residential mental health for -- for our kids. But, yeah, really, really, also agreeing, there needs to be more -- I mean,
we’ve talked about the need for more housing too. Like, we have nine -- a nine-unit facility, but we need more. We really do need more units for -- designated units for family violence prevention.

NAKUSET: For sure the housing is huge. You know, in a perfect world, I’d also like to have a better working relationship and funding for services for those that are in jail. Sometimes people chose to go to jail because they have nowhere to live, and it’s a warm place, you know, for the winter months. So if we have better services and collaborations with jails, that would be ideal. So -- and -- and half-way houses, we don’t have Indigenous half-way houses in the city, and they fall through the cracks.

MS. SUZAN FRASER: Okay. Thank you, all, very much. My time is up. And thank you, Commissioners.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Ms. Fraser. We would like -- we would like to call the Aboriginal Women’s Action Network, Ms. Fay Blaney. Ms. Blaney’s only requested one minute.

MS. FAY BLANEY: Good afternoon. I am Fay Blaney, and this is MiKenze Jordan. And I want to acknowledge the other Aboriginal Women’s Action Network members, Donna Dickison, Florence Hackett, Laura Holland, Amy Manyguns (ph), Ruby Langan (ph), several others that I’m probably forgetting.
AWAN requested a meeting with the Commissioners early on, and Chief Commissioner Buller came and met with us. We were so pleased that she was able to do that. And the feminists -- the feminists allies that we had requested this very panel. Not the individuals there, but that was our request that front-line activists and advocates be privileged in this process. So we really wanted to commend the Commission, and commend the panel. In our minute, we wanted to present gifts, and so MiKenze is going to do that. And while she’s doing that, I wanted to say that these groups have so many statistics and different types of information that the governments don’t normally access, and so it’s really important that they get that, they get that information on the record and -- holy cow, I’ve still got half a minute, I can’t believe it.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. FAY BLANEY: And with the half a minute, I just wanted to say that I’m really hoping that the Commission gets the extension for the two years so that they’re able to do the important work that’s required in part 2 and part 3, and I really thank you for your hard work. I’ve been here and witnessed you going long hours, and I really thank you. All my relations. Thank you, hey, miigwetch.

(APPLAUSE)
and Commissioners, there’s been a request for a break, and this actually happens to be a good point for our afternoon break. I’m going to request that it is a 15-minute break so that we can get through -- there’s cross-examination by Commission counsel left, questions that Commissioners may have, as well as re-exam. So if it could be 15 minutes, that would be great.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes, 2:55, please.

--- Upon recessing at 2:41 p.m.

--- Upon reconvening at 3:01 p.m.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If we may recommence. Next up we are calling Commission Counsel Jennifer Cox. Jennifer Cox will only be allowed to ask questions actually of Josie Nepinak because I have led evidence for the other two witnesses. And Ms. Cox will have the same that all parties had as standard, which is 19 minutes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Good afternoon Commissioners, witnesses. I would like to extend thanks to the Treaty 7 area, as well as the Métis 3 Nation and the Blackfoot people for this week, and the prayers of all of the Elders that have helped us to get through what has been a pretty busy week for us.
JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. COX:

MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Josie, before I get started, I did show you a document earlier, and Commissioners I did provide a copy to you as well, and the parties with standing have also been given a copy of the document, and it's titled, “Family Violence Prevention Programs Off Reserve.”

Josie, I'm wondering, is that something that you're familiar with?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, I am, and I did see the call for proposals.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, so, Commissioners, I'm wondering if I could have that marked as an exhibit, please?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes, the violence prevention -- Family Violence Prevention Program Off Reserve Called For Proposals 2018-2019, is Exhibit 56, please. No, I'm sorry, 55.

--- EXHIBIT NO. 55:

MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Josie, I'm just wondering if I could ask you a couple of questions about that. So you've --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So you've indicated to me that you had seen that call for proposals, I'm wondering, were you able to access that source of funding?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No, we didn't. And I didn't apply, either.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: It was a $50,000 grant. Can I talk about -- a little bit about my experience with -- or should I wait for your question?

MS. JENNIFER COX: No, you can -- you can talk.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. In the past we have had funding from -- from this particular body and we have -- it's a very cumbersome process to go through and the money doesn't come. For example, this was for our health program, and we had to wait ten months for funding, making phone calls, trying to track the money to have it sent out and -- but it is a very slow process.

And in the meantime, as a healing lodge and a not-for-profit organization as well, we have to still pay the bills, right, without this funding that's earmarked for
particular programming. So we're taking from Paul to pay Peter, which is not a good management practice, and certainly not something that would be -- you know, that our auditor looks down upon as well.

So -- and for $50,000, I'm not saying that that's not a lot of money, but to hire a staff person within a very short window of time, as well, is -- is very difficult. And does that constitute a full time? Because they also say, well, here's what you need to do, it needs to be earmarked for this, so now you have to think, okay, so how is -- what is this going to look like, where is this going to fall under in terms of the programs and supports that we do at the shelter. So it's been a very -- a very difficult process at times.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So this particular program is not something that would -- it's too -- basically what I'm hearing from you, correct me if I'm wrong, is that it's too difficult to access these funds?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: It can be very difficult as well, and I think when -- you know, as an administrator in the lodge I have to consider where my leverage area is, you know, in terms of energy, and in terms of where -- where do you put that time for your greatest return, and that is usually with the families and with the
staff that we have.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: The other thing I wanted to say is there's no guarantees for long-term or sustained funding for those grants as well.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So just getting back to the time that you mentioned, you have to decide -- I guess your evidence would be that it's too difficult, there's too much time required just to apply for $50,000?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, yes, absolutely.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And can I ask, has anybody ever reached out to Awo Taan about this program? Have they ever talked to you about what ways could we make it easier for you to apply for this?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: By email, they just -- you know, please see call for proposals and they send the link over, that's how we received it.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And have they ever come back to you and said, you know, you haven't applied?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

MS. JENNIFER COX: They've never asked you?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Have you ever had any conversations with anybody from the Family Violence Prevention Program?
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: A few years ago I did, yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. And I think what I heard you say in your evidence earlier, perhaps yesterday, was that you fundraise for the shortfall in your funding?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And it's approximately $400,000 that you need a year to supplement? Is that what I heard?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No, I didn't give that testimony of $400,000. We are -- we're more like $200,000, 250, 300 thousand is what we require.

MS. JENNIFER COX: For the extra, the fundraising, the casino fundraising?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: For the casino fundraising, we use that for our health program.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: And that's approximately $67,000 every 16 months.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. So I'm going to go to what's Exhibit 46, which is also the Round Table report, Josie. And you have that?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, I have.

MS. JENNIFER COX: You indicated to my friend that you have that in front of you. And I'm
actually going to look at recommendation number 7 of the report.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** I'm going to go a little more further into it, and it says that it's looking for culturally appropriate services for families who are impacted, for example, courtroom attendants. Would you agree with me that court workers for family law proceedings would be very helpful for your families?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, there certainly is. And quite often what we do is if we have a very difficult case, we will pull staff from other programs to -- to go and attend and support the individual who is going into court.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** But would you agree with me that if there were court staff or people who were court workers working specifically in the area of family law, that that would be very helpful to your families?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. Yes, absolutely.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And one of the things that you also -- I'm not sure if you're -- you also have collaboration agreements, other members of the panel mentioned that they have collaboration agreements with the local child welfare agencies or the local police?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Would you agree that it's difficult -- even though you have those agreements, it's difficult to get the agencies to follow through with them?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, absolutely it is, yes. And I'm not sure who reads the collaboration agreements, I mean, at the policing level. And unless it's trickled down to the -- to the people who are on the streets who do the work, quite often that information I don't believe is shared.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so would it be helpful if, perhaps, the Auditor General or the local child advocate looked at compliance with those collaboration agreements?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely, that would be great.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And just for the benefit of those who may not know what a collaboration agreement is, I happen to have some experience in that -- with those, but for the most part, when it comes to shelters, a lot of those collaboration agreements indicate that child welfare agencies are supposed to contact you first for assistance to see if there's any way the child and mom can stay together, right?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Right.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And would you agree with
me that there's a lot of times where they don't contact the shelter?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's correct.

MS. JENNIFER COX: With respect to the funding issue, would you agree with me that just having an amount of money that's just basically emergency funding, where you have the discretion to provide transportation and immediate needs in those 21 days that you've indicated, that, you know, if you were given a lump sum from the Federal Government for emergency funds for transportation and some really key things, that that would go a long way?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, absolutely.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And that you would be easily able to show how that money was being used, wouldn't you?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, that's right.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Without -- without big long reports.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And would you also agree with me that a narrative report or a report that's not full of numbers and all kinds of statistics and, you know -- that those reports are a lot easier for you to prepare?


MS. JENNIFER COX: Yeah. So -- and I'm going
to speak a little bit to the briefing note on -- that was prepared, so that’s Exhibit 47. You recall -- you have that document in front of you? It’s called “Briefing Note on Awo Taan?”

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And the reason that that was prepared was to help you with the funding, wasn’t it?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That’s right. That’s right, to -- to show our funders that we are, in fact, doing really good work, and here’s our literature, here’s our evaluation.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And you probably weren’t funded for that, were you? You probably had to find the money.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we weren’t funded for that. We had a little bit of money left in our -- what we call our SSR fund, and then we had to write letters to the funders to -- to ask them to spend that money for an evaluation.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Right. And if you didn’t have to spend all that money and time just to find how you needed that money, you could spend the time with the families, your staff could have wellness, or …

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, but on the other hand, I think that the evaluation also provides
somewhat of a -- a blueprint that we’re hoping that can be shared with other shelters or lodges across the country.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And going to that point, one of the things that could happen almost immediately would be a -- a meeting or a summit in Ottawa with the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs or Indigenous and Northern Affairs with the shelter workers to discuss all of your practices, to allow you to express some of your recommendations like we’ve heard today, and that would give you an opportunity to -- to be heard.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Would that be fair?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And one of the concerns that you’ve expressed, particularly here in the Province of Alberta, is that you don’t get heard. It’s hard for you to be heard.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That’s right, it is.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. You feel isolated?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, at times, yes.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so being able to have a summit with your fellow Executive Directors that run shelters, Indigenous shelters, across the country would provide you with the support, you know, in numbers.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. The -- the support
and the energy and the motivation to -- to hear what other people are doing, because sometimes you feel like you’re paddling your own boat, so to speak.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And would it be fair to say that your ability to advocate with the shelter workers’ associations -- so, here in -- in Alberta, you don’t have the ability to advocate because you’re -- you’re -- you’re a minority in that -- right?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That’s right.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So -- so if there was some advocacy at the Federal level on your behalf, would it be easier for you if there was more of a voice, a collective voice, from Ottawa that would support you in some of the initiatives?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Made up of Indigenous women, absolutely.

*(SHORT PAUSE)*

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Those are all my questions. Thank you.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thanks, Mrs. Cox.

Thank you, Ms. Cox. So that actually concludes the cross-examination portion of the hearing. At this point, I would like to ask the Commissioners if they have questions. Both Mr. Blain and I will have re-examination of the witnesses that I will assume will go after your questions.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We’re just going to take a five-minute break to get ourselves organized.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Certainly. Thank you.

--- Upon recessing at 3:15 p.m.
--- Upon reconvening at 3:21 p.m.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, I understand that you have questions for the witnesses.

JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you. First, thank you to all the panelists and to counsel. It’s been an absolute delight to hear your evidence and -- and to have you here today. Ms. Nepinak, I’m going to start with you because you’re the closest one to me, okay? When you say “beds,” you have a certain number of beds at your healing lodge, is that for adults, or does that include the children that come to the shelters with their mothers?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So that could be one mother and seven children.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That’s correct, and we have had one mother and seven children.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: You and the other witnesses have described how there’s a common fear amongst Indigenous women that if they come to a shelter or a healing lodge, that they will lose their children.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. That’s very common.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: And that’s become a barrier, actually, to women.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: What do you recommend as a way or ways of eliminating that barrier?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, I think the Child Welfare Act needs some reforms to -- to better protect mothers and children and not to use it as a -- a threat, because women have been told, you go to the shelter or we’re going to take your children, or while they’re in a shelter, the mom may be really struggling and for the -- and -- and -- and we often tell moms that Child Welfare can be a support service in order to access other -- other programs, such as child assessments, assessments for autism, et cetera, et cetera. But they are very, very fearful, so the -- they will rather not call Child Welfare to have those -- those basic services, because then it means that they -- they are vulnerable as well as their children. It’s a real fear.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So if
women, Indigenous women are -- mothers are being told, “You
go to the shelter or we will apprehend your children,” then
the length of your waiting list becomes absolutely critical,
doesn’t it?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. It certainly does.

In one of our programs, our -- our -- it’s called our Family
Violence Prevention Program, 75 percent of the referrals
come from Child Welfare and 99 percent of those
-- of those cases have family violence as a -- as an issue.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: As I
understand it, without going into a lot of details, you
receive funding from both Federal and provincial sources.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Mostly provincial.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Now, if we
think outside the box for a moment and consider your
facility or facilities a true healing lodge, would it be
more beneficial to you and the services you can offer to be
designated as a health facility or a healthcare facility as
opposed to something else?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I’m not sure. I -- I
like that, because I do think we focus on many of those --
the -- the -- the holistic concepts that -- that encompass
-- I’m -- I’m not -- but -- but I -- I like that. Yeah.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.

Thank you very much.
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Ms. Montour?

SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M’hm?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: A similar question. You’ve raised the -- the barrier that many Indigenous women who are mothers face, that they have a fear of losing their children if they come to a shelter, or, alternatively, if they don’t go to a shelter. What do you see as ways of eliminating that barrier?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, there are some best practices that are happening in Ontario. There is -- there are shelters that have -- that are very -- work very closely with Child Welfare so that the actual Child Welfare has workers in the shelter, located in the shelters. So, I mean, I think that’s a good idea, and that’s something that we have been wanting to do with our new Child Welfare, our new designated Child Welfare, Ogwadeni:deo. And our hope is that that person would actually -- we even talked about that person being an employee of Ganohkwasra rather than -- so that way, we could train that person. And yes, they would -- they would be more employees of us both, but they wouldn’t -- and they definitely would be still there for
Child Welfare, but we would teach them to be more supportive and more -- to work with our families and to work with us rather than apprehending right away or doing the punitive approach.

So there are various shelters in Ontario that actually are doing that, and it’s working. They talk about it working very well. You know, they talk about -- what we dreamed of is we dreamed of being able to have our -- our -- our resident in, who’s having problems with her -- with Child Welfare, but bring in the -- bring in the Child Welfare with our -- with our staff as well and working together and -- and ensuring that she knows, you know, what she needs to do. So I know that -- I agree there’s a lot of hoop-jumping, that old system.

I think I’d also agree that there needs to be better -- better collaboration between the Ministry of Child and Youth Services and the -- and the Violence Against Indigenous Women sector. We need to be working better together, and I know in Ontario, we’re planning to do that. Just some really good best practices. I know the Ministry of Child -- Ministry of Community and Social Services, they do things like they bring in the VAWP sector [sic]. And they consult with us before they do anything, so they -- they’re doing that with the Violence Against Women sector.

And I’d like to see our Ministry of Child and Youth Services
also doing that, consulting not only with the Violence
Against Women sector, but the Violence Against Indigenous
Women sector.

So I think there’s ways that we can work
together, and -- and I know there’s been a lot of -- you
know, I know that Child Welfare system is trying to reform
itself, and -- and doing -- they’re trying, but I -- I just
know that we still have a ways to go. So there’s that
possibility of -- of -- there needs to be a better working
relationship. And I think those collaboration agreements,
they could work too. They could work if somebody was
monitoring what Child Welfare is doing, you know?

I -- I -- I’m -- I’m not legislated, I don’t
have no power to do that. I can only monitor what we’re
doing on our side, but somebody needs to be monitoring those
-- those collaboration agreements. They’re -- I think the
tools are just -- they’re already there. If somebody could
monitor on their side and -- and make them accountable, like
we’re accountable, I think that -- I think it could work.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.
You mentioned earlier today about hearing that one Chief and
council spent money designated for a shelter for
something --

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: -- other
than a shelter. I’ve heard, all across Canada, similar stories.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** How do we hold our own governments accountable for the safety of our women and girls?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I’ve thought about this. I really have, because it -- and it’s happening, more than one shelter for sure. You know, it’s happening more often than I’d like to admit out there. So, I mean, I thought about what the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario could do and -- and how we could help those shelters. Ideally, I’d like to see the money go directly to the shelters. Right?

So what I know that that’s stepping on the Chief and council’s toes, if -- especially if they have arranged that the money go to them first and then they -- they transfer it to the shelters, however they do that. But ideally, I’d really like to see the money going directly to the shelters, and maybe there is more accountability that states on those -- those agreements that this money is for the shelter. You know, like, it -- they could still do something else with it, but I think they would have to be a little trickier about it. And, you know, I think that -- I know that INAC has tried different ways to make sure the money goes directly to the shelters because I know INAC was
aware that -- you know, they had concerns about this, so
they've tried different things, but -- I mean, I even
thought about ASOO, how ASOO could help because we're -- we
are an incorporated organization, I thought about us, you
know, but I don't -- I don't want to -- I don't want to
ruffle feathers, I don't want to -- I don't want to sever
our relationships with -- with those communities, that's not
my purpose because I just want to help those shelters.

So I think there's ways that -- you know, maybe it's how it's written up with their -- with each
Chief and Council, maybe it states in there that this money
is to go directly to the shelter. Maybe it's ensuring that
those shelters have their own bank accounts, you know, so
that the money can be just transferred in that way, I'm not
sure. I think there's ways if -- I think there has to be
ways that we can do this.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank
you. I want to ask you a little bit now about aging out of
the child welfare system and the youth beds that you have.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: At what
age -- or what is the upper limit for the age for youth in
your youth facility?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Eighteen.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.
Are they allowed to bring their children, if they have them?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** If they have children, they would -- they would be probably in the shelter, more than the youth lodge.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We would -- we would bring them into the shelter and we would support them there.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** M'hm.

From the continuum of care that you're able to offer, what do you see that are the biggest obstacles or obstacle to Indigenous women aging out of the child welfare system?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I -- I think that there needs to be -- I see -- what I see is there's -- what we've seen traditionally, I think, is the fact that once they reach that magic age they're just let go, all the supports just stop, and I know with all the reforms to legislation they're trying to change that.

I just think there needs to be more -- more wraparound services as -- as the youth age, age out of the child welfare system, more supports. They do so much better when there's family supports. And if it can't be family, maybe it's developing some other type of support for the youth as they're -- as they turn 18 because
it's -- it's -- you know, it's a hard, hard life out there, and when you have no supports, and I mean healthy supports -- so hopefully maybe more focus developing those networks and those supports for the -- for the youth before they -- way before they turn 18, so that they can have, once they do -- once they do start to age out of the system they're not just left alone, and they're not just out there vulnerable to human trafficking or whatever is out there for them.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

Thank you, very much.

**NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

**QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Nakuset, you mentioned a checklist that you use to put complaints in writing --

**NAKUSET:** M'hm.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** -- about racism. Would you be willing to share that checklist?

**NAKUSET:** Absolutely. I would have to email it to you, it's occurrences for outside appointments or something like that, but it's only I think -- well, we definitely have it in English, I'm not sure if we have it in French, we probably do, but, yeah, I can send that to you.
Chief Commissioner Marion Buller: Thank you.

Nakuset: Am I sending it to you? Who am I sending it to?

Chief Commissioner Marion Buller: Christa.

Nakuset: Okay, I'm sending it to her.

Chief Commissioner Marion Buller: Thank you. You also mentioned this morning an empowerment fund. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Nakuset: Like, in a perfect world if you were to have that? Okay, I think every individual has strengths, and I think that it's so easy to focus on all the negative things of what's wrong with people, but if you were to look at an individual and find that strength and help develop it so that -- sometimes people don't even know what their strengths are until someone actually points it out and says, Hey, wow, you're really amazing at this. I am? Okay, so let's work on it, let's develop it. And that could be sort of their passion.

So if we -- because I think, you know, everybody -- you know, we're gifted with life, we all have a purpose, and if we can help people find that purpose through this empowerment fund, that would be a good life. So, like I said, in a perfect world, but it could be done.

Chief Commissioner Marion Buller: Okay,
thank you. And again, the same question, the fear of
losing the children being a barrier, if that's the correct
word, to coming to a shelter, how do we address that?

NAKUSET: Well, you know, I'm not sure if
it's the same when you're off reserve so much. I think
that -- or maybe it's just the fact that people know that
we are trying to work more with Social Services that they
see us more like a safety net, like, they can come to us
and that we have, you know, all the services that
are -- that are needed.

But, for sure, there's still a lot of
problems with youth protection and, you know, how she
was -- Sandra was saying about trying to hold youth
protection accountable to their honouring the
collaborations, and that's why we have a research, we're
doing a research with Dr. Elizabeth Fast into how all the
youth protection workers at Batshaw are applying the
collaboration, and that way you can actually sort of gauge,
and also strengthen the relationship because we have focus
groups and we find out from each division because it's all
very complicated. And you have this EO department and this
other one just for youth and one for those that are in
special facilities, it's like -- it's crazy. But we get
all of them to kind of sit together and have conversations
about what is working, what is not working, what do you
know about Indigenous services, what are your difficulties, how can we help.

And then eventually we want to create a CIG, which is a clinical integration group because this would actually be mandated by Batshaw that their staff have to attend and have to work on this particular issue.

They used to -- they had one for sexual assault and it was sort of mandatory, now we want it to be for this group, for the Indigenous kids in care. So -- so, yeah, I suggest, Sandra, you get a research, get a research.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you all three. Thank you very much.

NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup.

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Just give us a second to get set up here and get her going on her translation.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup. Bonjour, Josie. Vous savez, je veux commencer, pis ça, je suis fidèle à moi-même, c’est mon style pis je vais rester fidèle à moi-même. Lorsque c’est cette
période-là. Il y a une façon de poser de questions parce que des enquêtes c’est des enquêtes mais moi, je l’ai fait toujours différemment mais ça revient au même. Je veux vous dire un gros, gros merci pour votre courage. Je veux vous dire merci pour la force que vous avez de continuer. Vous avez mentionné que vous sauviez des vis, vous avez mentionné que vous avez donné un empowerment à des femmes et des enfants que vous avez réunis. Des enfants séparé de leurs mères. Vous avez fait beaucoup, beaucoup de magie, beaucoup, beaucoup de magie puis plusieurs entre nous connait très bien les sacs de poubelles parce qu’on à du quitter d’urgence une nuit sans voiture, sans argent et se retrouver dans des centres d’hébergement. Mais mon époque, il n’y avait pas d’hébergement en milieu autochtone où pour recevoir des femmes autochtone alors j’ai toujours une grande, grande admiration pour ces femmes-là, qui sauvent des vis, qui a sauver ma maman, et ma maman aujourd’hui redonne à la communauté parce que justement, il y a des gens comme vous qui l’on aidé. Je vais essayer, je vais commencer avec la communauté Six Nations.

Ma première question pour vous, est-ce que vous recevez du financement de base du Ministère qu’on appelait avant INAC?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.
COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Est-ce que ce financement de base là ressemble ou est l’équivalent des maisons d’hébergement non-autochtones en Ontario?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: INAC doesn’t fund -- INAC doesn’t fund the mainstream shelters in Ontario. So our -- so --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: My question was -- I’ll ask in English for you.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: This part now, because it’s easier in English for me, but there’s a part that it’s going to be in French. I know INAC, you saying is financing you, because you’re in a community.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay? Core funding.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And the non-Native women shelter, the non-Native women outside of your territory, it’s coming from the Ontario government?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Do you -- do you know how much they receive in core funding?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: No, I don’t know. And that’s why Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario wants to do this
research, to find out to really concretize what the
difference really is. So how much funding they’re receiving.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: And how much funding we’re receiving. And to -- to -- to see what the difference really is. That research needs to be done, and that’s something that we are planning to do, as -- as an association.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Is that a recommendation to support this?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, please.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. And is -- is it something that it should apply to across Canada, this recommendation?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: You know, if I can talk about the very first time I came to a gathering of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, out in Vancouver I believe it was, I remember -- what I remember -- one of the things I remember the most was all the shelters that came up to the microphone, begging for help, asking, saying how underfunded they were, and needing help.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: And -- and asking, begging for help. And I -- that really struck me because I
knew exactly what they were saying. They were talking about
the comparison, the wage, the --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: -- the funding disparity
that exists in Canada. And they were begging for help. So,
yes, I think that needs to be done across Canada.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. In
2000, in -- in '98 I think it’s where Nakuset, you started,
in those -- those years, in '98?

NAKUSET: I started the shelter in 1999.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: '99, okay.

INAC was funding shelters across Canada to an amount of
$100,044 -- Cent quarante-quatre mille in English? $144,000
for 16 bed in 1998. Now we’re able to see true -- what the
women push, of course, over the years. That the average
it’s 450 -- $450,000. Quatre cent cinquante mille. For --
$450,000. I am getting better. For 16 bed. For a non-
Native in Quebec shelter for the same services, not
culturally, we -- we talk about core funding. For the same
amount of bed, 16 beds, it’s almost $900,000. So there is I
guess, a gap.

You -- you mentioned that you have to be
very, very creative, in order to -- to respond to the demand
and help the women. You get from INAC, but do you get also
from the province? I think, yes.
MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, we get money also from the province.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. And is -- are you a regional for your -- for the First Nation, or it’s only for Six Nation?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: No. We are -- well, for the province, it’s any woman.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Any -- any -- from anywhere could come.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. Good.

Merci Beaucoup.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M’hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And I -- I’m not aware about Ontario, but do you have any like, for Indigenous, and if you answered that, I’m sorry, secondhand --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Stage.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Stage. Merci.

Oh, you -- you do for Indigenous women?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Second stage, yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Housing?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: You have?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, we have nine-unit
second stage housing. We -- that was built in oh, I want to say in -- in the 90’s it was built.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. But what about you, Josie? (Indiscernible) nothing?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: We don’t have any -- we don’t have a second stage, but we would like one.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Same thing in Montreal, Nakuset?

NAKUSET: We’re opening one fairly soon. The City of Montreal has -- well, we found a location a couple of years ago, that’s a couple of blocks away from the shelter. And the City of Montreal sent us a letter last week saying that we could have this building, so it’ll be 29 units of you know, for like, a three-bedroom apartment, two-bedroom, one-bedroom and what do you call it? Tiny little apartments? Studios. Studios.

And we’re going to be trying to get funding through (indiscernible). There -- he knows all the different funders that would -- that we can apply for, however, I also sent Prime Minister Trudeau a letter, asking him for seven million dollars for the amount. And I sent it to Jody Wilson Raybould and the Minister Carolyn Bennett, because you know, they’re trying to help Indigenous people, so they should fund us. We sent them floor plans and the budget and a beautiful letter. Haven’t heard any response
from them yet, but we’re -- we’re waiting.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** The beautiful things -- it’s national. It’s life.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Oh, for sure a message went to the right place.

*(LAUGHTER)*

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci beaucoup. Thank you, thank you Madame Montour, and I have to say on a personal note, it was very, very touching, very beautiful the way you welcome us --

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M’hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- when we visited you many moons ago. Well, of course, with the Inquiry, I was there with a colleague, and Dylan Fern (ph) and we saw the beauty and the magic that you are doing for the women. So thank you so much. For the -- the -- the shelter who are not on communities, so Madame Nakuset and Nepinak, when a woman leave a community, you do receive women from communities, huh?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, yes.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** When they leave, and they go to your place, to your shelter, is the community still involved financially for all programs and services to support --
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No. No. It’s -- it’s just a shelter funds only.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And does it bring a challenge or difficulties?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, it -- there’s always things that we need. For example, if mom arrives, you know, she’s -- she’s got three little ones with her, you know, we may not have the right formula in the house. And formula is very expensive, as you know, diapers and you know, we -- we need to ensure that we have the appropriate -- well, the beds are there. They’re already funded, right? But there -- there’s the issue of clothing often. Quite often families have to leave with what they have on their back.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: And so that’s important. So that -- that can pose issues. Absolutely. I mean, even just around the city when -- when they’re -- let’s say for example, they need to go visit a doctor or get some dental work done, et cetera. We -- we give them one -- one bus ticket to go there, and one bus ticket to come there -- to come back. And so it’s a tight budget in terms of transportation. So yes, it does pose its challenges.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm. And you get, I -- I -- I didn’t take the -- the notes. Same for
you, Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, because you’re based in the
city, is it from the province or INAC, the core funding?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** From the province.

**COMMISSIONER Michèle Audette:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yeah. Also for the
province. And in terms of the other question that you
asked --

**COMMISSIONER Michèle Audette:** Yeah, sorry.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- the Cree’s, we
get -- we can bill the Cree. So for services, if they refer
the -- the clients to us sometimes they’ll send clients
because they want the client to utilize our addictions
worker and our -- our therapist, and you know, to see our
Elders, so they’ll send them for like, a couple of weeks.
And because they have more money, they can afford it. But
that’s probably the only community that -- that offers, I
guess, financial help.

**COMMISSIONER Michèle Audette:** Okay. And
we -- we’ve heard from Chief Commissioner and Madame Montour
that when you’re based on a community, it’s an agreement
with the Chief and council.

**Nakuset:** M’hm.

**COMMISSIONER Michèle Audette:** Right? You,
Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, do you have to go -- is the
mayor and the councilor, or -- administrating your funding?
MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No. No.

NAKUSET: For us it’s -- it’s the CS now that covers it. So, you know, and -- and we just have to, you know, do the statistics, which I presented, so you can all take a look at the statistics I’ve did for this year. And we have to have our AGM. And then we send in the report before, you know, the end of this month. And then we’re -- we get our monies.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. And my last question for you, Nakuset, we all -- about your list now.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Your checklist.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Checklist. And it’s same for you, the other women from the -- the shelter, Madame Montour and Madame Nepinak. When a woman come and it’s -- she -- she share her story like we’ve heard across Canada, that either the police or the system discriminated her, or something went wrong, or she didn’t get the service that she was supposed to get, I’m sure -- I don’t want to say I’m sure, but is it things that it happened to you also?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, absolutely. We hear the stories all the time about the dismissive attitudes of the police, and how difficult it is to -- to have services
from them, or to ask them to intervene when there is a
violent situation.

COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE: Madame
Montour?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes, definitely. I -- I
know that that is true. And a lot of it -- what we hear is
-- a lot in Child Welfare. We hear that -- the way they get
treated in the Child Welfare System. And we strongly
advocate for them. And I know that they know that we’ll do
that. And -- so we are actually trying to have a better
relationship with our Child -- our new Child Welfare System.
We -- we only hope for the best because we have a new
designated Child Welfare System at Six Nations. But we also
have to work with the old Child Welfare System as well. And
we’re -- we’re really hoping for a better relationship. We
want things to change. Things need to change.

COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE: Okay.

NAKUSET: And, you know, at the Native
Women’s Shelter, it’s pretty much across the board. So
every single service provider they go to, they usually have
difficulties. So that’s why we always send out the staff.
Because it’s the staff that will put a stop to it. The
women they -- they just take it.

I mean, you know, we had the -- there was
a -- a particular woman at the shelter that I’ve known since
1999, and she -- she was abused, thrown around by a group of police officers at Cabot Square, and I was alerted to it after the fact. There were a couple of community members that got involved that made a report to the police and because I signed the agreement with the police, they were, like, “You -- you should do something.” So the woman that got abused by the police, not only did she get abused by the police, but then she got ticketed in -- while she was in the ambulance, because they end up having to call the ambulance, they gave her a ticket. So I saw her at the shelter, and I was like, “Listen. I’m going to go and see the -- the police commander about this. Do -- do you want me to do that for you?” Because I need her permission. And she looked at me, and she was, like, “You would do that for me?” And that broke my heart. I’m, like, “Of course I would do that for you.” So I did it, you know. And we’re still waiting. That was two years ago. And it hasn’t been, you know.

The first group of police officers, they said, “Oh, we did an internal thing, and we were saving her life.” You were not saving her life. So then we have to go to the anthology, I mean, there’s a French word for it, so you have to go the second step, and we’re waiting. So she’s still waiting for her day in court.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. When
you hear -- when they come to you with the -- those sad experience, do you officially, if they agree, bring them to the -- the Human Rights Commission, or Ethic, or a place where they receive complaint like that?

**NAKUSET:** We do when we can. And if they want to, a lot of the times they don’t want to. You know, they’re too afraid to do it. So the first part -- the -- the first witness was from the Open Door, who saw it, and he put in the complaint. And then I was, sort of, like, taking the baton and then taking the next step because the woman was Indigenous, I signed the agreement, so I need to figure out what’s going on. But we always offer that. But at the same time, we try to let the women know what they’re rights are. We try to, sort of, guide them to all the different people that are working in, you know, Native Para-Judicial Services, or First Peoples Justice Centre, or you know, the, sort of, experts in the field to help them. So we’re always referring, but really the most helpful is when we stand by their side.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M’hm. I -- I do want to say with the Six Nations Police, we’ve come a long way. Like, I -- we have an excellent relationship with them. And we’ve worked hard to make that happen, and I know they have too. So if there’s a complaint like that, I -- I could call up the Chief and say, “What are you doing?” I know, and --
and he -- and he would explain to me what happened, or he’d apologize.

And, I think, for us the -- we have a high-risk committee that I co-chair with the police. I think that has brought us such mutual respect in the work that we each do. And so I -- I feel that if there was such a complaint that came to me, to my attention, I could just -- I could even -- either text them, and say, “I need to talk to you, and I need -- you know.” And I know they would respond, and they would -- they would sit down with me. And -- and if it’s a mistake on their part, they would say, “You know what? We blew it. And so it -- we’ll get this officer to apologize.” So I know that we -- we worked really hard to make that happen, and so have they. And I’ve -- I just have total -- I have a respect for them, for the Six Nations Police and what they’re -- what they’re doing. I -- I believe in them.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: Merci. Madame Nepinak?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: M’hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: Do you bring them -- or follow, or support them?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: We provide them with the -- with the resources, and the referrals. But quite often, as I mentioned, they are in the shelter -- in the
Lodge for — for 21 days. And within those 21 days, the —
the energy is very low. And -- and they’re really concerned
about the — the immediate experiences that they’ve had
around --

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- trauma and ensuring
that -- that their children -- that they are okay. But we
do have outreach workers that have supported staff to --
supported women to -- to attend seminars on -- on human
rights, and to -- and we encourage to -- to write a
complaint if it involves the police. And we show them how
to do that. And -- and, like others have already expressed,
there -- there is a fear around doing that.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Because they feel that
they won’t be listened to.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** M’hm. Merci
beaucoup. They feel listened by you and protected by you.
And we have so many communities, and cities, village, and
places across Canada that they deserve a place safe like
you’re providing. So merci beaucoup.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Miigwetch.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Thank you.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah, sure.

Sure.
MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner Robinson?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Hi. (Speaking in Native Language). I have a couple of questions for you, Nakuset, for clarification. And then the rest of my questions, I would like any of you, or all of you, if you feel you want to respond, to do so. I understand that Nunavummiut women, or citizens of Nunavik northern Quebec, when they’re sent down for medical, they have access to interpreters, and transportations, and things like that. If you are a Nunavik Inuk woman living in Montreal, or a resident in Montreal, can she access those translation services that are available to those who are part this health provision system, between Nunavik and Montreal?

NAKUSET: They would have to ask.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: M’hm.

NAKUSET: I -- I just met the -- the director of the new -- it’s not called Northern Module anymore, and she’s absolutely --

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Terrific.

NAKUSET: -- amazing, the woman who runs it now. I have -- I don’t remember her name off hand. I don’t know if it’s not medical related, if they -- it goes outside of their mandate I'm not sure if they're allowed to.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay.
NAKUSET: That's the problem.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: M'hm. And then you gave us this scenario of a police officer or a frontline person refusing to speak English. With the language laws as they are in Quebec, and this is -- I've heard this from others as well, but it was told that that was the service provider's right, to give service in French and wasn't required to give service in English. Is that something you know about, whether that's okay to say, no, I'm going to speak French?

NAKUSET: That is the reality of Quebec right now. So there have been horror stories where people have, you know, gone into the ambulance and the ambulance attendant will only speak French and not English, and people are freaking out because they don't understand what's going on. So it's pretty much across the board. You can go to the medi-care office and there's a big sign saying, you know, *La language française, tu dois parler la langue*. And that's why we always have to that send our staff with the women, because they don't -- if they don't speak the language, they don't get the service.

It's the only way -- it's the only loophole. I can't force people to -- you know, to speak English, but when that woman needed to, you know, have a report done because her daughter went missing, that's crucial. He
doesn't want to, you know, talk to her in English. Jessica took care of that, she translated everything.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And for Nunavik Inuit women and children who you work with in Montreal, the primary languages as I understand it are Inuktitut, second language is usually English or French?

NAKUSET: English.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And how many do you know that -- how many do you encounter that are trilingual?

NAKUSET: There are a couple, but they've lived in the city long enough --

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Yeah, yeah.

NAKUSET: -- to learn it, so --

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.

Now, this is for -- for anyone who -- who wants to chime in. One of the things that I noticed in your -- all of your testimony, and yesterday from Ms. Anderson, and everywhere we go the importance of advocacy and navigators. And -- but that doesn't always have to be a lawyer, you know, and that's -- that's the other thing that -- when it comes to navigating these legal or administrative systems, there's this misconception that you need your law degree to be an effective guide.

We've heard from other women about the need
for Indigenous women advocates, and it strikes me that
that's what you're doing in many ways. Are you funded at
all for that specific work?

NAKUSET: No.

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No, we're not. I think,
if I can just -- please. It becomes part and parcel of the
work that we do every day. If it is about supports for mom
when she -- let's say for school supports, that her child
is registered in the local school and how do we -- you
know, we -- we send advocates or child support workers to
be that bridge and to -- and to provide that transitional
support, but quite often it is advocacy work. Because
you're teaching often about family violence even to
teachers who are receiving the children in their grade 3
and grade 4 class, or grade 1, even the bus driver. So
every day there is advocacy that happens on so many levels.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Now, I don't
want this to be interpreted as me recommending or thinking
that the government should just create another pocket, I
would envision that this be part of a more holistic and
comprehensive way of providing financial support, but do
you think that Indigenous shelters should receive funding
for that type of work?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Can I answer that
first --
COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Yes,
absolutely.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: -- that -- your last
question? So at Ganohkwasra we -- actually, there was a
call for proposals about, oh, I don't know, about six years
ago, and instead of the three shelters applying and
competing for the same dollars because there's three court
systems within our Haldimand-Norfolk branch -- county.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: M'hm.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: This was just for legal
advocacy. What we decided to do is we decided to split
that one position into three shelters. So we get 12 hours
of legal family court support work as paid for. But do we
need more? Absolutely. So each one of those -- those
other two shelters are mainstream shelters, so we share
that. We didn't want to compete with each other because we
knew two -- two of us weren't going to get it, so that was
our -- that was our solution.

So -- but do we need a full-time family
court support worker? Absolutely. I think every shelter
needs at least one. There's actually other shelters out
there that have more than one because they're so busy, and
that's just specifically for the court.

But that advocacy is what our shelter staff
do all the time, we're very good at it. We're navigators,
we help women and families to navigate the system. We're very good at it.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. In terms of that right -- or that service being properly funded and being recognized as an essential service as opposed to a pilot project or a -- would you agree with me that that's how it has to be looked at?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I'm seeing all heads nod.

NAKUSET: And I just wanted to say, I found the woman's name that I wanted to mention. Her name is Maggie Putulik, and it used to be called Northern Module, but now it's call Ullivik and it's an absolutely beautiful centre, and she does amazing work. And she's, like, crazy awesome, this woman, so you might want to ask her whether or not she would lend her translators for other services.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. What I've -- we've heard a lot about how you are funded, how are you supported and use multiple different pockets, and there was a program, and I think, Nakuset, you mentioned it having been a source of financial support for you at one point, but the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, I believe it sunsetted in -- oh, just before my son was born, 2009.
NAKUSET: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Now, as a Commissioner, I don't -- you know, reinventing the wheel is not always the best way to start, so I'd like to ask what your thoughts were on how the Aboriginal Healing Foundation supported you? Was that funds you were able to access? Was that model of funding, did it allow you to do the work you know you need to do?

NAKUSET: Can I answer that first? Sorry.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: You go ahead.

NAKUSET: Okay. So, yes, we received monies from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- oh, my goodness. So with that money we were able to do -- we had a sexual assault worker, we had a family care worker, we had a healing lodge coordinator, we had a clinical supervisor. We were able to get all the other -- program director, we ever got a student in the summer to help with the healing lodge because we sent the women away for, like, two weeks to this beautiful location. And with the program director we were able to get, you know, the art therapist in, and the Elders in, and the psychologists in, and we would have massage therapists in, and we have wellness days and we would -- so it was crucial. When they cut the funding, I was in shock.

I think I was on maternity leave. It's so
funny you were talking about your baby that's, like, the same age as mine.

But, yeah, we were in shock. And then it was sort of, like, okay, now what do we do? So we're having a spirit walk on June the 16th, so we used to get two weeks for the healing lodge that we had through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, now we have, you know, four days that we can fundraise from the community so we can send our women, you know, out of the -- out of the city to just breathe.

Then I had to find another family care worker and then I had to, you know, keep on my clinical coordinator because, you know, she's someone that really oversees all the case management, manages the stage students, you know, she has a lot of weight on her shoulder and we need the expertise. And when they cut that money, it's -- we -- we ended up, you know, absorbing that position through our core funding, because it’s essential, and then we were trying to fundraise for other ones. I got monies at one point for the family care worker through ESDC, then they said no one year. Now, you know, I’ve applied through the McConnell Foundation. We’ll see if they will continue with, like, well, I sent them a completely different proposal. Family care -- just for the family care system.
You always have to think outside the box and you also have to dream big, and this is what we’re continuing to do. So we wanted -- we want to -- want to make sure that we have monies for the essential services that our women need and then we also have to look into the future about, okay, so this isn’t moving fast enough. I have a collaboration agreement, I have the research of the collaboration agreement, and yet things are not moving fast enough. What would make it fast enough? Oh, okay, we’re going to apply for that. So that’s what we have to do.

We have to come together and we have to dream big and then we have to find the people that are -- are open. Because if I had sent the same proposal to a different government agency, they’d be like, are you crazy? I sent it to someone else and they’re like, oh, my God, this could actually work. So we like those kind of people.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. We -- we also applied to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- and we were very successful and the programming was amazing. We were able to get our very first sexual assault supervisor, sexual assault counsellor, so people, for the first time, formally received sexual assault therapy at our -- in -- in our community. And we did groups and we did art therapy groups, we did -- we worked with men, we worked with children, we worked with adults, and we did a lot of
community education, and that lasted for about four years before it was cut. So that was our very first -- but there was a lot of healing that -- that Ganohkwasra was able to do with that funding.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And we’ve never accessed the Healing Foundation monies.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I think my last two -- one is a -- a -- a question in terms of the -- the National Summit and gathering, which I think is -- is -- gathering and sharing is so important and learning from each other. And you touched on this a little bit, but it -- would you agree that it’s really important that these summits be sort of distinctions-based, that it not be sort of pan-Indigenous or -- and they’re -- that it -- ensure that there’s space for all nations? Inuit, Métis, and trans and two-spirited?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**NAKUSET:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, I have to tell you that, since you guys have been on this panel, from the voices behind me as well as in the hallways and in my phone, how many women have said, “I want to do what they’re doing for my community,” and saying, “How do I start?”

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.
COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: First, in terms of the financial resources, would you recommend that there be money to facilitate women coming together?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

NAKUSET: Yes.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Now, did you have -- and then, my last question is, do you have any advice, guidance, words for the women watching, listening, sitting in this room, on how to start?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Well, I think it starts with a -- with a vision of the women in the community and that vision of healing and wellness. And to -- to bring in supports to do that, because most communities are not resourced to -- so it takes a lot of will, a lot of determination. I have a lot of confidence in the women out there because we women are warriors. We’re -- we’re fighters and we make things happen, you know. We’ve made a pot of soup with 50 cents. You know, so we -- we can do a lot of things that -- if we’re put up to the challenge, and I do believe -- and I -- actually, I would like to challenge women across the -- across the communities. Let’s do it. Give us a call, email, Facebook. Let’s do it.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can’t help but think
of our founding board -- board of directors, who were a group of women back in the '80s that -- that were meeting at -- at their -- in their basements, in their house, and they -- they were meeting because one of our community members was taking in women into her house from abusive partners because she didn’t want to go to Brantford. She didn’t want to go to Hamilton. She didn’t want to leave the territory, so she was bringing her in, she was bringing in women into her home. And -- and from there, that dream became -- they got more women involved and more women involved and they kept meeting and they kept asking people to help. But definitely, there’s a lot of shelters out there, and I think every community should have a shelter. That’s my personal thought. So if you want to start one, just give us a call. There -- we will help you. More power to you.

NAKUSET: Because the -- the Native Women’s Shelter is in the city, anyone who wants to get into this field in the city, you need your education. You -- you need it, and you need to walk between two worlds, because all the partnerships, all the people you’re going to have to deal with are going to be non-Indigenous, so how are you going to be able to communicate with the language that they respect or honour or whatever you want to call it? And then also be able to almost translate the same sentence to someone who’s
Indigenous and be like, okay, well, what she really means is
blah, blah, blah. You know?

Like, and dare to dream. I mean, I’ve been
working at the shelter, and when I worked there, they’re
only -- when I started, there was only ten staff. We’re up
to 24. I think that, you know, from -- personally, I’m the
kind of person that, when I see an issue, I kind of look
around the room, and I’m like, is anyone going to do
anything? No? And then I step forward. And if I don’t
know how to do it, then I find the experts in the field to
make it happen. So that’s what you have to do, because I
really -- I don’t know a lot. I mean, I may sound like I
know a lot, I don’t know a lot. But I have a lot of smart
friends that help me and push me forward and we go together.

We -- it’s really about collaboration and --
and -- and building bridges, and -- and we do it for our
women. Because, you know, they talk about the next seven
generations. That’s our -- that’s our job, to make it
secure, you know? I would like to make my -- work myself
out of work. That or it doesn’t need to be a shelter. But
we’re not there yet.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you all
so much.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner

Eyolfson?
COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you. I did have a few follow-up questions for you all, but they ended up getting asked by my colleagues, so …

(LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: So I think I don’t want to be repetitive, so I -- I’m not going to ask you any questions. I’m just going to take this opportunity to thank you so much. It’s obvious you’re -- you’re -- you have limited resources in your work and your time is precious, so I think we’re truly blessed to have had you come here and spend this time with us and share your knowledge and your expertise. So I’m truly grateful. Thank you so much.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So Commissioners, we do have a redirect, but rather than asking for a break, I’m going to ask that we just stand for one moment, so I can confer with my colleague and then proceed into re-examination.

(SHORT PAUSE)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- in total we do have for their re-examination, 20 minutes. Both, Mr. Blain, I don’t think we’re going to take that time, but what I’m going to suggest we do ‘cause we’re both very
amicable to sharing the time, is that we set the 20
minutes, but I just ask that you stop the clock when Mr.
Blain’s done just to give me a moment to start my
questions, if that’s an acceptable approach?

    CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes,
    thank you.

    MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

    JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:

RE-EXAMINATION BY MR. DARRIN BLAIN:

    MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Thank you. A late good
afternoon to the Commissioners. My wife is upstairs
watching this on -- online. This goes to one of the
comments I just heard and all of the clapping. So I went
up there with lunch and she met me at the door, and I said,
How do you like that panel? And she punched her arms up in
the air and said, “You go sisters.”

    (LAUGHTER)

    MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Josie, we had someone
here from the Federal Government -- this goes to your
comments about funding -- who painted a picture for us a
few days ago that the funding for First Nations health in
this country is something to be celebrated, it’s a
beautiful story, and it’s something to get excited about.
Those are her words. I notice that she’s not here, I wish
she would have been here to hear your -- your comments on
the -- on the panel. What we’re hearing is that it’s not a celebration, it’s not a beautiful story and it’s nothing to be excited about, but rather the way that you get funding for your organizations and the way that -- or the amount that you get is cumbersome, frustrating, time consuming and it takes away from the real work that you want to do. It’s paternalistic and it’s demeaning, correct?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: And I’m wondering if your funders -- you talked about the statistics that your funders like you to have, and all the forms that you need to fill out to get a few dollars --

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Right.

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: -- on a regular basis. We talked about periodic quarterly and annual funding, and that kind of thing. I’m wondering if the same people that hold your feet to the fire will let you hold their feet to the fire, and I’m wondering if there -- the agencies that you deal with regularly or ever, as a result of having no beds available, and having to turn Indigenous women and children away, ever ask you for the statistics on how many women have been killed, beaten, raped, left by suicide, lured into sexual exploitation as a result of not being able to come into your shelter?

MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No, we have never been
asked that question.

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Thank you. And my final question is this: I was unable to get this representative from the government, the good doctor from the government, to agree with me that this is of national importance, and this is of national concern, and it might even be an urgent concern. And she wouldn’t agree with that, so I’d like you to respond to that. I’d like you set -- set the stage and bring the truth out, Josie. And my question to you in that regard is, from all the evidence that we’ve heard this week on the status or the state of affairs with respect to Indigenous women, safe places and shelters in this country. Are you confident enough to look at that Commission and tell each one of those Commissioners that this represents a national urgent concern that should receive principal consideration, fulsome consideration in the Commissioner’s Report to the public?

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Those are my submissions. Thank you.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah, can I just --

**MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Sure.

**MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah. I -- I -- I just want to say yes, we are. We need to declare a national emergency with respect to the number of missing and
murdered Indigenous women that are killed. I talked yesterday about the war on Indigenous women, and how that continues to play itself every day. And until we have the -- the appropriate resources and supports on the ground, then that's not going to stop. We need to look at the systemic. We've already talked about some of those with the police and investigating the police and look at the linkages with -- with -- with other systems such as child welfare, residential school, how it all plays into the current state of -- of affairs with Indigenous women and how that places us further into dangerous domains. And so all of those systems together, and I have confidence that -- that you, the Commissioners, are going to take those recommendations and -- and move forward.

I'd also like to recommend some action. Let's -- some action to -- to get this work done. There have been other inquiries, there have been commissions, there -- et cetera, and unfortunately some of those have gathered dust on library shelves across this country, and I would like to say, let's -- let's not let this one lie. Let's move on.

We -- we have one kick at this cat and let's -- let's do it in a good way, and thank you so much for what you do. (Speaking in Native language).

MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Ms. Big Canoe.
MS. SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. I will be doing re-direct to both Sandy and to Nakuset. I only have, like, some clarification questions, because we’ve already heard a lot from both of you.

Sandy, earlier today one of my colleagues, Ms. Beamish, asked you about safety -- safety requirements and maintenance in terms of standards --

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M’hm.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- and you described a number of things that you have to do.

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: M’hm.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just want to ask you, are you -- do you know whether or not the building codes on reserve have different a standard than those off reserve?

MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I believe there’s a different standard, yeah.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So if I -- if I told you or you just accept it as true, that the Federal standards for building codes on reserves are different than the provincial ones, and just for the sake of this question, you believed that I told you that they’re higher for provincial, would you be able to tell me, based on your
own experience, if the on-reserve -- the actual on-reserve shelters are in buildings that are often dilapidated or need roofing or are not meeting the same building standards as you’d expect from off-reserve, would that --

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** (Indiscernible) safe houses. Just have to go to take a visit of one on-reserve shelter and go and visit one off-reserve shelter, and you would see for yourself.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And again, I don’t like speaking generality, but you know, in terms of the ASOO members that are the Indigenous ones, do you know if each of those communities actually has a fire -- an actual fire station or fire services?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don’t know.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay.

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don’t know. Each one of their -- our members, if they do or not. I don’t know.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So just in your own experience in Six Nations, is there a fire?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if there was an emergency or safety a concern at Six Nations, you would have a local response?

**MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.
NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:

RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Nakuset.

NAKUSET: M’hm.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Earlier my colleague asked, and you’ve been speaking a lot today about all of the funding and the different pots and pools you have to go to. And earlier my colleague actually asked Josie about the Family Violence Prevention Program off-reserve call for proposals. It was Exhibit 55. Are you also familiar with this funding proposal call?

NAKUSET: I am.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you guys make a call for the funding?

NAKUSET: Yeah. So what happened was that this is something we applied for, and when we applied for it, we wanted to tweak it a little bit because I think that every woman that comes through the shelter has -- has lived violence, and because of 85 percent of our clientele, also deals with addiction, we wanted to kind of create a violent -- family violence and addictions program. So that’s what we submitted to them. And it said that we could only have ten documents submitted, and some of those were letters of support. We actually had seven letters of support, so we couldn’t even include them all, which is -- you know, I
guess a good thing, but still we -- we sent in the application, which was, like, three pages, and then we had another -- another couple of other things. We had audited financial statements, blah, blah, blah. We sent everything in on time, and then I get an email from AADNC saying something to the effect that, Thank you for submitting, but our computers aren’t able to decode the language in which you sent it. And I’m, like, isn’t that ironic. They still don’t understand us.

So I’m not sure what’s going on with the computers at INAC because our computers aren’t, like, you know, super, you know, wonderful computers, they’re regular computers. We just sent the exact form that they sent us, we just send it back to them. They can’t open it. Okay. So we -- you know, I -- I was concerned though, because we -- we submitted it by a deadline, so I’m like, “Does that mean you’re not going to accept it ‘cause you can’t open it?” They’re like, “No. No. No. It’s our fault. So we’ll accept it, but can you scan it or something so we...” the next day we re-submitted it.

Then they said, “Okay. Great. We’re going to let you know whether you got the money, or you didn’t get the money by mid-May.” It’s June. Time to start stalking, because we haven’t heard from them, and that’s something that we have to do. Can you give us an answer? Because we
have to plan.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

**NAKUSET:** You know? I mean, the -- the
person that we wanted to hire to be the addictions worker is
waiting to know, can I start work? Well, you know, I
already applied for another -- the Echo Foundation from
Montreal, and they gave us $20,000, so we’re going to start
her off with 20, and I am going to motor to find the rest of
the money. So it’d be awesome if they gave me an answer, so
then I can look elsewhere, but that’s an essential service.
And that’s the pitfalls of working with government forms.
Hopefully they’ve upgraded their computer since.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. I have just
one last question for the both of you. And I -- I’ll draw
your attention to the screen, ‘cause this -- this picture
actually comes from an exhibit that came -- oh. Sorry.
This picture actually comes from an exhibit that was put in
through Josie in relation to the report she wrote. And this
morning one of my colleagues, Ms. Julie McGregor (ph), you
know, mentioned the comment of you know, the -- the fact
that it’s been characterized as a war on women.

And so -- and we’ve been -- I think you can
-- it’s fair to say everyone’s acknowledging you as
warriors. But I’ve also heard a lot about wanting peace.
And I know that in terms of the words of inspiration and the Commissioner asked you that question about you know, there’s all these women that want to do this, but what are the words that you think of every time you leave your space, your shelter at the end of the night that’s of hope for the women in your shelters?

NAKUSET: What?

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Instead of war, what other words, or what -- what -- how would you like to characterize when you think of the women that you’re leaving in the shelter at the end of your work day, or the long hours; what is the hope? Or the positive inspiration you’d have for the women, instead of characterizing it as a war, what would you like it to be? And you first.

(LAUGHTER)

NAKUSET: Strong comes to my mind as you say that our Dawn Song.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: M’hm.

NAKUSET: Our Dawn Song is -- was actually a -- used to be a -- a war song, but because it was so beautiful, we kept it as the Dawn song. We call it the Dawn song. And it’s a song that it’s a -- it -- it means new beginnings. It means, for us at Ganohkwasra it means, “Looking to the east and seeing the sun come up.”

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: M’hm.
NAKUSET: And that’s what -- that’s what I want for our women. that’s what I want for our people, is new beginnings. I want peace, respect. The good mind. The great law of peace. All these things are -- are what -- what I would -- I want for our -- our women. And -- and joy. I mean, that’s a -- that’s something I pray for every day, because you know, as a Indigenous woman myself, I know trauma. I know -- I know what it’s like to live in trauma. And I know that very well. And I know what it’s like to live in grief. And I pray for joy. I want to know joy. I want to know laughter. I want to know family. Those are things I want for me, and those are things I want for all our women. I want them to know joy, laughter, belly laughs, peace, friendship, sisterhood.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: M’hm.

NAKUSET: Sacred sisterhood. That’s what I want.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: M’hm.

NAKUSET: You know, when I think of this shelter, I had a colleague that came in about a year ago, and we -- she was sitting in my office, and I’m on the computer. And she was listening to the women in the other room, the common room, and they were laughing, and they were talking. And she looked at me, she goes, “This kind of reminds me of like, a dorm at a sorority.” And I thought,
that’s a really good compliment, ‘cause like, we’re a crisis
centre, but the women at the shelter, when they come
together, you know, they find ways of -- of coping. And we
often do it through laughter. But you know, when they leave
the shelter, what we want for them is like, safety and
empowerment. ‘Cause as much as we can support them when
they’re in the shelter, they need to find those tools to do
it for themselves, and for the next generation. You know,
they -- they’re -- they’re the future leaders. Then they’re
going to be you know, working, bringing up the children and
creating the next group of -- of future leaders. So
whatever tools that we can give to empower them, to make
them all warriors as well, that’s what I want.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Those are my
questions. Thank you very much. So in terms of formally
closing the -- oh, sorry, I apologize. Chief Commissioner, I
understand that you --

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** It’s okay.
Well, speaking of joy and laughter and empowerment, we have
gifts for you. We were told by the matriarch on Haida Gwaii
on the west coast to gift our witnesses, all of them, with
eagle feathers. Well, you don’t argue with matriarchs. We
all know that.

*(LAUGHTER)*

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So we have
eagle feathers for you. And I’ve learned across Canada that there are different beliefs about eagle feathers, but I think it’s safe to say that there’s some commonalities that eagle feathers lift you up and hold you up in the moments when you need to be lifted up and held up. And then when you dare to dream, they’ll help you reach your dreams. So these are our gifts to you because you’ve given us more gifts than you can ever imagine.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I’ll let you do that.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I’m sorry.

**(SHORT PAUSE)**

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Waiting for our official closing in ten minutes, please.

**(SHORT PAUSE)**

--- CLOSING CEREMONIES

**MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Check, check. It’s funny I say, “check, check,” on the microphone and -- and I’m thinking about something else at the end of that conference. Yeah, we -- we’re prepared, Chief Commissioner, for the closing ceremonies, and I just wanted to say, we added as much as we could into the closing ceremonies. We even have a fashion show, so.

Just real quick, ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to introduce you to a -- a sister of mine. This is
Tasha Snow (ph). She’s the -- one of the -- I think almost the youngest of -- of the late Chief John Snow. And Tiffany, if you could come and join here. Tasha has been a -- has been a care worker and a worker at -- for a number of years, Eagle’s Nest is the shelter out in the Stoney community. Chief John allowed me to -- into his family and invited me, and so I’m an adopted brother. Tasha’s also a seamstress for her children for the powwow and for ceremony where -- anyways, for Mother’s Day, we had it arranged for Tiffany to have this dress. Tasha creates this dress, and it’s created in honour of the murdered and missing. And if you look at the pattern, there’s one woman in the dress that’s wearing red. That’s the dedication to the Inquiry. And so if any of you people out here would like to have a dress made, Tasha’s here. And it’s in special spirit and in honour of you all, so thank you, Tasha. Give them a round of applause here.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Tasha will stick around. That’s the end of our fashion show.

(LAUGHTER)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: We -- we have a number of things that we’re just going to kind of get through. And I’m going to invite Sarah to say a few words on behalf of the -- the Advisory Council, and again, we’d
like to honour Cynthia Cardinal, Melanie Morrison, and Myrna LaPlante, and Sarah’s going to say a few words, and of course, our sister Charlotte Wolfrey is going to help us with the Qulliq as well. So I’ll ask, Sarah, if you could come forward and say a few words in our closing?

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They’re all coming forward.

**MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Oh, they’re all coming. Okay. I’m sorry. Come on forward. Again, give them a round of applause for joining us here.

**(APPLAUSE)**

**MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** (Speaking in Native language).

**(LAUGHTER)**

**MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** Because I -- I wanted to -- okay. (Speaking in Native language).

You are amazing people, the ones that were in the panel. Strong warriors, wow. I wish I could be that warrior, like you guys. Wow. And it’s good to know that you are helping women and children when nobody -- when nobody can take them. When people are just turning away. Wow. I’m -- I can only say “wow.” You remind me of polar bear, you know, mother polar bear, strong, who’s protecting her cubs, and you guys are like polar bear, protecting these women. Lot of little cubs. Protecting them. Polar bear is
strong and powerful to protect her babies, so I see those in those women that were speaking here. So thank you.

Thank you to all the parties for being in -- sharing the work that you do. Good questions. Wow. You have amazing questions here, too. Thank you for the staff for making this happen, to all the staff that are here with us, and Blackfoot people for welcoming us here, naqurmiik. Welcoming us to the -- this place, beautiful place, Calgary.

(Speaking in Native language) Where did I write it? Jason Goodstriker. Thank you. You’re such a funny guy.

(LAUGHTER)

**MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** You make me laugh, you make us laugh. We really needed that. Thank you. And you’re always welcome to come in my hometown, to Nunavik. If that will happen one day, you will be very welcome.

That's all I can say. A lot of -- seeing all of you great women here, wow, we -- together we are strong, all of you. All of you here, thank you for all the work that you do, everyone. We have to protect women and children, even men, even our men, so thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

**MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY:** Sarah, you're going to leave me here alone? I would say something too. I thought they were going to leave me, but they wouldn't do that.
Thank you, Sarah, for your powerful words. You're powerful, you're a polar bear, *nanook*, thank you.

And I'm going to say, I'm going to be kind of business like instead of heart stuff. I -- I too am a member of NFAC, and that's the hat that I've got on right now. I would just like to say thank you to the people on the panel who gave us the information that you gave us, and I really wished at times that I could jump in. Especially from the representative from FNIHB, I really wished I could have jumped in and asked some questions.

I would also like to thank the organizations with standing who asked the questions for us. Thank you, you ask good questions.

If I had one wish, it would be that all the provinces and territories would have a place at the hearings -- I've got to find my place again now -- so that the questions could have been specific to the realities of what Indigenous women are dealing with in their province, in their territory, in their community because the -- I think the Commissioners are getting a small glimpse of what is or what might be across the country, but I think that it is integral to make recommendations when you know what is across the country.

So I guess when I'm saying that, and I'm not a lawyer, but I'm going to use a phrase that I've been
hearing all week, would you agree --

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I love that word.

MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: Would you agree to ensure that the Inquiry has time and resources to finish this inquiry right --

(APPLAUSE)

MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: -- so that we can get it out there what the specific needs are of the territories and the provinces?

And to the Commissioners, thank you for listening. I don't envy you for having to sit hours on end. My butt was hurting on those beautiful good chairs, so I really don't envy the job that you have. (Speaking in Native language). Thank you everyone.

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you, Sarah. So this is going to be the final remarks of the Commission, and we're going to do some -- we're going to sing you some songs in a few moments, but -- and we have a few words to share.

I was just speaking with Chief Commissioner Buller about, just like what Sarah said, what if there are people out there that want to make a submission? I would just advise that you can either call Carolyn or you can
navigate the website, murdered and missing website. And if you're a program person from a department in any of our cities or any of our communities in Canada and you feel the need to send in a letter or your report or such, or comments that you have, you're more than welcome to submit them electronically online.

So thank you again to anyone who is watching, and that's an extension of an invite for all of you all to have your voices heard.

We're going to first off introduce for the final time here Chief Commissioner Buller. Give her a big round of applause.

(APPLAUSE)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you very much, Eric. Thank you. One of the biggest challenges I face is getting to the lectern without tripping.

First I want to recognize and thank the people of Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation in Region 3 here who have hosted us so warmly and so graciously this week.

I would also like to thank Norton, also known as Spike Eagle Speaker, and Alvine Wolfleg Eagle Speaker, you've been wonderful to have. Gerald Meguinis, John Wesley, Edmee Comstock, and of course our very talented Jason Goodstriker.

Thank you also to the drummers, the
Blackfoot drummers for welcoming us and making all of us dance. Thank you. It's hard to stay in your seat when they're performing.

I also want to thank our Elders who travel with us, our grandmothers who keep us pointed in the right direction, pick us up, dust us off and set us out again when we need that, and it happens from time to time.

Thank you also to the traditional knowledge keepers and our NFAC, National Family Advisory Circle, members who were here all week well. Again, they keep us pointed in the right direction and we're grateful for their guidance as well.

To the honoured witnesses, to those of you who shared your knowledge and expertise with us, I want to thank you too for helping us to understand your work better. And I want to thank the parties with standing who were here this week, thank you for your thoughtful questions. They are so very important to the truth gathering part of our work.

I also, of course, want to thank the most amazing translators at the back of the room who we very rarely see, but upon whom we rely.

And last but certainly not least, the most amazing National Inquiry staff who work tirelessly because of their love of their work and their love of our people.
I found it very helpful this week to understand a little bit more about how government services work, whether it was victim services, health services, family violence prevention, addictions, mental health services. All of the witnesses described their special service delivery challenges, especially in the north and remote areas. That was very important to our work.

We also heard about the frontline workers, those who, based in culture and tradition, work tirelessly daily, often in unsafe conditions to strengthen, support and empower now generations of Indigenous women and girls.

They work hard every day. They work in circumstances that would try the most patient of us. I am grateful that all Canadians had the opportunity to hear this week about how hard the frontline workers work every day and how they're pressed for resources to do their work.

Knowledge brings understanding, which brings compassion. We're learning that this is a challenge for all Canadians.

We've also been able to connect the dots a bit more about how we've heard in the past from families and survivors and the difficulties they've had in accessing programs and services across Canada. Now, we’ve been able to connect some of those dots to the service, and the service providers. We have a -- a wealth of knowledge and
information now. That we have to take time to carefully analyze and reflect upon. I’m grateful to everyone who’s participated this week.

Personally, this week has highlighted and reinforced how ending violence against our women and girls is a responsibility shared by all Canadians. It’s important that we continue to build partnerships with each other because that’s where the strength is. Unfortunately, though, we were -- we’re reminded again this week, and took time to honour that we recently lost more loved ones. It is difficult, truly difficult to hear about these tragic events as we work across Canada because we hear about these losses far too often.

The lives of Indigenous women and girls depend on the work that we do. And we’re aiming for, of course, recommendations that will work to end the violence. And as one of our witnesses today said so perfectly, to end the war against Indigenous women and girls. We have to work together to stand up for our mothers, daughters, nieces, cousins, aunties, those who are no longer with us. And those who can’t join us. Those who are able to join us too. We must remain strong and united because the lives of our sisters, and mothers, and cousins, and daughters, grandmas, all depend on it. And the urgency is palpable.

I’ll close by saying, we’ll meet again in a
few weeks in Toronto for our next hearing on racism. I expect it will be as moving, and as thought provoking as this week. Thank you all again. And I look forward to meeting you in a few weeks in Toronto. Safe trips home to everyone. Thank you.

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: We’re going to invite Commissioner Robert [sic] -- Robinson to come and to have some closing remarks. And I’d like to thank and -- we move forward.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: First, I’d like to say thank you, (Speaking in Native language), to the wonderful welcoming we’ve had from the Blackfoot Nation, from the Treaty 7 Nations, as well as the Métis Nation in Region 3. I’d like to thank the Elders who’ve guided us every day, started us with ceremony, with prayer every day. I’d like to thank the Elders and grandmothers who travel with us and guide us and set us straight every day. I’d also very much like to thank you, Jason, for -- for the laughs. Yeah. The drummers for the songs, and -- and that medicine as well.

I want to acknowledge the families and survivors who have come to bear witness as well. This is your space. I want to acknowledge and thank the National
Family Advisory Circle members that are here with us, Bonnie, Cynthia, Sarah, Charlotte, and Melanie. And we’ve also had Myrna was here with us as well.

I’d like to thank the witnesses. The women and men who have come and shared with us, and answered hard questions, and talked about tough truths. And did so in an honest way, and in a good way. And -- and I really want to express my gratitude for that. And I asked at the beginning of the week, to -- to -- for the witnesses to give themselves to this. And I think that they rose to this. And I thank them for that.

Parties with standing, I’d like you to -- I’d like to appreciate your -- your time here, your questions. Also, for sitting in the seats for so long, and -- and working together, and asking questions, thought-provoking questions that have us all thinking about how we move forward.

We’ve learnt so much this week. So much. And I acknowledge what Charlotte has raised. Let’s be frank, it’s the tip of the iceberg. But we learnt about the challenges of the availability, accessibility, and the appropriateness of Victim Services, health and wellness services, and safe space and shelter access. We heard that the needs are so high, but they’re not being met. Even with the amazing efforts of the grassroots and the community-
based groups we’ve been hearing from. We’ve heard that there is a tremendous disconnect between government funders, and community-based service providers in the women, girls, trans, and two-spirited, that these programs and policies are -- are designed to serve.

We’ve heard what the solutions are as well, and we can’t brush over that. A wrap-around, community-based support that meets all the needs, rooted in culture, relationship, and that recognizes the inherent strength of the women, not as victims, but as strong, capable, rights-holding, worthy humans. We’ve heard that in this effort, there’s challenges. This is the approach that grassroots and community-based organizations are trying to provide. They recognize that women and girls aren’t, “This is where my health is going to be addressed. This is where my mental wellness is going to be addressed. This is where my spiritual health will be addressed. And this is where my shelter’s going to be addressed.” They are whole beings, that need holistic help and support.

But at times, government priorities, policies, mandates, and programs don’t see it this way. And this is a big problem in the disconnect. Existing pockets that don’t fit the needs, limited opportunities for those experts, community-based groups as well as those with lived experience have an opportunity to help inform the design and
the priorities and the policies of these programs. That partnership and relationship needs to happen more. We heard some examples, but we heard what the challenges are when it doesn’t happen. Lack of data, lack of information, lack of evaluating effectiveness. You know, what’s needed. But you don’t know how what you’re doing is meeting that need.

We’ve heard about two very -- three very concerning realities. A lack of political and institutional will, discrimination, and racism. And I look forward to the conversations we’ll have in two weeks in Toronto, where we will talk about racism. Because until those ideologies of supremacy are rejected, change can’t happen fast enough.

I’d like to thank all those that have come forward. What we’ve learnt this week is going to help. Not only create safer communities, but the goal is not just to stop the violence. It’s for -- to allow Indigenous women and girls, trans and two-spirited, to reclaim their space, their place and their power. (Speaking in Native language). Thank you all for being here with us this week. And I look forward to us returning in a couple weeks. Safe travels.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You too.

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you, Commissioner Robinson, who have beautiful moccasins by the way, so. All right. I’m going to call forward again for the final time on the week, Commissioner Eyolfson. If you
could kindly step forward. Give him a round of applause.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you for this wonderful, very full week of hearings. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the people of Treaty 7 and Métis Nation in Region 3, who have so graciously welcomed us to their beautiful territory here this week. I’d also like to acknowledge the support and guidance provided to us throughout this week while we’ve been here by all the -- the Elders that have been with us, who started us in a good way every morning. By our grandmothers who travel with us. And by the members of the National Family Advisory Circle, who have also been here with us this week. Thank you very much. And also, I’d like to acknowledge the drum, and thank the drummers and the singers for their -- their songs. And thank you to our MC, Jason, for getting us going in the morning, and the entire National Inquiry team for helping this week happen.

I also want to acknowledge the important contributions made by our witnesses this week. They shared their knowledge, their expertise, their recommendations with us. And I also want to say thank you to all the parties with standing who helped shed light and helped us more fully understand the issues concerning delivery of services to our
Indigenous women, girls and trans and two-spirit people through their very thoughtful strengths this week.

I found it very valuable to hear about many of the things we heard this week, such as the delivery of victim services, and health services. Particularly, some of the challenges -- challenges and gaps in those services. Some of those that occur in the northern communities in particular. Also, the importance of providing services for our exploited youth in a way that’s informed by lived experience. And also, the resource challenges of shelter services that we heard are so crucial to our Indigenous women and girls.

And I just also want to take this time to say this week I was also reminded of the role that men have to play in ending violence against Indigenous women and girls. As men, we need to come together to find ways of ending violence that our Indigenous women and girls, and trans and two-spirited people face. And we need to talk to other men about these issues. Ensure that men are held accountable. And we need to work together to end violence.

So what we learned this week has built on what we heard through the community hearings, and the statement gathering events. And it’s also been a compliment to what we heard in our expert hearing. And I look forward to seeing many of you at our -- our next expert hearing on
racism in Toronto in a couple of weeks. And I just want to end by saying thank you to everybody. Chi-miigwech, and I wish you all safe travels home to your family. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Commissioner. Oh, my friend, my sister, gee, you know, Commissioner Audette and I, even though I’m 45, we’ve known each other since we were -- oh, over 60 years I would say. So give her a big round of applause. Thank you again, Commissioner Audette.

(APPLAUSE)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Did you say that we were liars when we started? We are not, you are.

(LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, I want to say (speaking Native language). I see, and I heard, and I join my heart and my voice to my colleagues, to Commissioner who said thank you to all of you here. And the families, I want to add from -- from the bottom of my heart, I see there is family members in this room that spent the week and listen. Or spoke to us, shared their concern. Their tears are -- was afraid that we failed -- failed them or failed you.

I don’t know if I’ll be able to solve everything. I don’t think so. But one thing I know, that I
am walking beside you, because you’re my mentors. You’re
the women and the men, and the youth and the Elders that are
telling us, telling me why we need to do this. I don’t have
to be here like you, you don’t have to be here. We should
be dancing, celebrating, but because we lost a loved one, or
because we’re a survivor, or because we’re continue what our
ancestor asked for many decades to find the truth, because
we know that truth, but to share that truth to Canada. And
make sure with that truth, that Canada, Alberta, and the
rest of Canada, provinces and territory, would honor that
truth.

And I’m going to fight for that. Sometimes
I’ll cry, sometimes I’ll speak loud. Sometimes I’ll be
quiet, but I’m going to fight for this justice. For my five
children, and my granddaughter, but also for the friends
that I met over the years. Some that I reconnected here,
some that I met here. And I know we’re 75, maybe 80 of us
on this amazing, tough journey; this National Inquiry. But
it’s nothing compare when you lost -- when you lose a loved
one.

So we have to make sure we do not fail you.
And if we do, I apologize. But after, I’ll become Free
Moccasin, I will continue that’s -- that journey with you.
It is something very different compared to the hearings that
we had with families and survivors, but still inside, deep
inside, we had panel that came from communities, came from
organization, from grass root organization, that demonstrate
the difference or the gap between the mission statement or
between the objective of this services or this institution,
this government.

They came here to show us and show Canada
that what’s written there on the website, it’s not the
reality on the ground. That we’re still in the survivor
mode. That we’re still fighting among ourself [sic],
because there’s not enough. So of course, in this report,
the voices that we’ve heard today and yesterday, and weeks
ago will be very important in this work. Very, very
important.

We receive truth this week and we’ll receive
again next week. There was an important debate also this
week; how should we share that truth? Believe us, we want
to receive the truth from every government. From every
organization, but we have to do it well. And I will fight
to make sure we do it well, but many of us will -- will do
it. So I’m very confident.

We’ve heard a lot about finance, the budget,
money. And I understand that there is a big gap on how the
mission statement will provide the funding to the
organization. And when a family is turned down because
there’s no room in the shelter, and couple days later we --
we found out they’re dead because they weren’t safe. They weren’t protected. So there again, we receive so many proof, so many proof from the strength of the family across Canada.

And I want to say to Canada, very sincere, very open heart, very open mind, that there is still 500 family members and survivors that took the courage to register to this -- to here, and to come and share their truth. How can we honour that? The staff is exhausted. The Commissioner, not yet, but soon. But how can we make sure that we are healthy to receive that truth when we still don’t know if we do have or not an extension? Just tell us. Just tell us how many months, how much we will receive. Not for us, but for this mandate. The mandate you -- you gave us. From that after, you’ll see if I agree or not. I’m asking you, give us an answer. Family deserve an answer. Survivors deserve an answer. Our Elders, in fact, all of us, people in this room deserve an answer.

You have a good example this week that different government across Canada, from provinces wanted to share their truth, their document, but because of lack of timing we had to say a kind of no, which I think it’s not fair. So everybody deserves a time here in answer to our question, tough question, but deserve also to explain why.

In conclusion, I'll say again to the
families that I met this week, I don't know if we will
cross our path again, but social media is there, if you
have a concern, if you have a beautiful word to share to
us, or a tear, I'm not far. I'm not far.

Again, thank you, because of you, the love
of the Elders, the song, the ceremonies, the willingness of
what you are sharing to us, this is why I wake up every
day. This is why I'm stubborn, and I am your ally. I am
not perfect, but fudge, I'm dedicated. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you. We just
are very happy to hear your words, and I always look
forward to your -- you're very well thought out and you're
very methodological. I've never met -- I very rarely met
leaders that take the time to put in that amount of effort
in what you say and how you lead.

I was asked to say two things. I just
wanted to -- I will keep it short. And in our ways we say
(Speaking in Native language). So years ago I was made an
announcer, so I'm asked to say things privately and to
bring things forward, and that's kind of been my job for a
long time.

My dad was a -- like I mentioned, was a
20-year member of the National Parole Board, and one of the
things that he said on all of the people that were on the
inside, men and women, he said one thing that I noticed in
the interviews was that many of them didn't have Indian
names, and so he said whenever you have access to a crowd,
whether you're at a powwow or something, encourage people
to give their children Indian names. And that's a little
bit of homework.

And he said because when you name a spirit,
it will help you and it will continue on in their lives.
And it's very few tools we have for our children when
giving them ways of protection as they go forward in their
challenges, so I would just extend that to you from my
father, to -- no matter what colour you are, because we're
all children of Earth, and you can seek out Elders' help or
people of experience and get them Indian names if they
don't have any just yet. That was one thing.

Last night when Elder Blu and I were having
a discussion, a midnight smoke of course, we were talking
about a lot of things, and she gave me a real powerful
teaching. And we all have -- every family has people in
it, what the outside society calls it is LGB -- and
a -- and a whole -- it's just -- it's the English alphabet.
We say (speaking in Native language) that's our people,
they're neither men, neither women, but they're people.

And I can honestly say that I've seen some
statistics from family members of mine who are this way,
and I was very astounded to hear about the numbers of, you know, suicide attempts, arrests, dealing with addictions and going beyond, the bullying that happens when they're young and in school. And this is something that's going to be perhaps the next steps of where we're going, and as we -- as we unwrap the issues through the -- through the Inquiry.

But what Blu told me was that -- it was a special teaching, and it was, you know, the residential school agreement that we all were a part of when we came to be, one of the things in the school's lasting legacies that unfortunately lived in our communities, that we were ashamed of the people like that. We were made to feel ashamed of the people, and so it all went into a deep dark place for a lot of years.

And now what Blu has told me last night, was one of the things that was so special was that it was foretold in a profit -- in a prophecy from some years back, that the children are going to be the ones that will strengthen the identity again and make us all proud and again family members.

Now we see it. Now it's come forward. So she asked me to mention that, and that was something that's very valuable, and the days of shame are in the past. Like my friend, Emery (ph), would say, The past is the past,
so -- but this is something that I was asked to say.

I'm going to ask Sarah to come forward and to help us with the -- oh, Charlotte. Oh, I'm sorry, Charlotte is going to help us with the Quiliq, and the Elders, I'd like to ask if Spike and Alvine would help us out, and all of our friends here -- oh, Gerald is here as well, Meguinis, from Tsuut'ina, and Edmee Comstock from the Métis Nation to come and say some words of prayer.

Now, we're just at the tail end, we're going to all get out of -- get going here in a few moment, but one of the special things about being Blackfoot, and most any of you have this in your cultures, that we protect ourselves on our travel, so these are going to be prayers for yourselves and your family, but one thing I'm going to ask the Elders that you consider when you say your prayers and when we take down the lamp, is that we -- we pray that this is going to go somewhere with the Federal Government, and we pray that this isn't going to be a Royal Commission stuffed on a shelf, that this isn't going to be a Kelowna Accord that got dropped off the earth, that this is actually going to happen, and we're going to need to do something about that.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: So I'm going ask the Elders to use that in your prayers and ask for that,
that we have a continuance. (Speaking in Native language)

**MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** Excuse me. If I can have a minute, if you want to put the timer on.

(LAUGHTER)

**MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** You know what, as Elders we just sit and sit and sit, but, you know what, we -- we do like to come up and say something, we do. And this is the reason why I'm here. Nobody elected me to be here, I just figured I'm going to do it.

I want to thank the people that asked my husband and I to be the Elders within this room within this week. It was a pleasure.

I would also like to thank the Elders of this region for helping us out. Without the Elders' prayers and without their knowledge, wisdom, my father used to say, nothing will go.

Without the Elders that we have gone to school, like all of you. You have big degrees, you have bachelors, masters, doctors, and some of you might have triple doctors, but we too go to school. And we -- we learn to be who we are and to do the best job we can do.

Everything that has happened here, I too suffered on the streets of Calgary with my children, a little boy that was 2 years old, a baby in my arms and two little girls, I was refused to have lodge. It's supposed
to be a safe house, it's supposed to be safe for me. I remember the dumpsters today where I slept with my children.

I know how it is to be down and out. To have a life with my husband, it was all because of Elders' prayers, it was all because of their hard work to make my husband a better man. Without the teachings of our Elders we won't be where we are today. I don't know where I would have been, or my children. The wisdom that we've learned, and the knowledge, and above all, the love that was taught to us through our smudge. The first time you -- you burn your smudge, that first smoke, teaches us that that’s love. Love for anybody. It doesn’t matter who it is.

Today, I walk proud. Today, I learn to love a lot stronger than I did before, because I blamed everybody for what was happening to me. Today, you young people have a lot of backup. I wanted to say something yesterday and a person here asked me, “You should go up there and say something.” As Elders, we don’t like to just step in and say, hey, what, let me say something here. There’s a lot of young people that overstep us as Elders. We don’t use Elders and just put them on a shelf, why -- every once in a while, dust them off. You utilize the Elders with your mind, body, and spirit. That’s how you use the -- you don’t use them or abuse them. But a lot of communities do that.
I want to thank the Committee again for giving us the opportunity to share, giving us the opportunity to listen. I see this thing on TV and I often wonder, what is it, what’s going on? Today, this week, I learned a lot, and I’m going to go back home to my community and I’m going to tell them we need to get going here. I don’t know where -- what’s going on, if anybody has stepped forward to fight. If I have to fight alone from Siksika Nation, I will.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER: These are some of the things. I, too, sat there. I felt your pain. I also felt your love and your friendship. There’s a lot of people that went by us, me standing there smiling away, and they walked right by me. Thanks to the people that stopped by us to give us a hug, to thank us. Thanks to them, because they probably were taught how to treat an Elder in a right perspective.

Our prayers. It takes a long time for us to be where we are, and I can never, ever say I learn -- I -- I know everything. When I go to the spirit world, I will try my best to help whatever is happening here. I’ll do my best. Because I don’t know what kind of a job I’ll have over there, but I will try my best. I just wanted to thank the panel for teaching me. The lingo is kind of hard, but I
figured it out, and all it meant was, you’ve got to fight.  
Don’t give up. That’s all they told me. Fight together.  
Like the holders of Canada. This is our land, let’s fight  
together rather than fighting each.  

I want to thank -- and I could never get her  
name. Where’s that lady that was going to put me in her bag  
and take me home? I might need a ride to Toronto, so maybe  
I’ll -- I might take that offer and jump into her suitcase.  

(LAUGHTER)  

MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER: There you are.  

But my husband and I have talked, we’ve cried in our room,  
we’re silent, but we’ve prayed hard. These are not the  
cries of -- of being unhappy. We cry because we’re -- we’re  
not sad, we’re happy. We do cry when we’re happy, too, and  
that’s where we are. My husband and I are 48 years, a lot  
of years for us to be together, but we made it with the help  
of the people that open their doors to us. Sometimes  
there’s basements, walking up and down the streets of  
Calgary to find rent. Our children are running by us. We  
buy bologna, bread, one little hop, we tell our children  
we’re going to have a picnic. We let them sleep and we’re  
on our way.  

Those are some of the experiences that make  
us strong today. And that’s why you have to be strong. I  
love all of you, and in my Blackfoot language, when -- we
don’t have a word for “goodbye.” We just say kitaakotamattsinoo. “I’ll see you later.” So I -- I think I took more than one minute. Sorry about that.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER, MR. SPIKE EAGLE SPEAKER, MR. GERALD MEGUINIS, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK:

(Speaking in Native language).

--- CLOSING PRAYER

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Hey. Thank you.

MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK: (Speaking in Native language) and thank you, everyone, in English. I will say it, and I did ask for the government to come through with the money and to bless each and every one. Commission, the panel, any. And my Elders that I learned so much from them as well. (Speaking in Native language).

(APPLAUSE)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: (Speaking in Native language) -- anyways, my late grandfather, his name was Pinakwiam (ph), he -- he was a holy man, and I was two weeks old when he gave me my first song, and it was a travelling song. Anyways, he had a dream, and it came about when he rode amongst an enemy in his dream, and he rode a sorrel horse. And he used the song over the years, and it was gifted to me with my first Indian name. Anyways, one time he was flying down to Los Angeles and they ran into
turbulence real bad in Colorado, so he started singing the song right on the plane, and the plane leveled out and everything was okay. And it, of course, a protection song for your travel.

They got towards Los Angeles and then started to circle the city, and when they were circling the city one of the attendants came up to him and said, would you come with us to the front of the plane? So he went up there and -- this was, of course, way before the laws changed, but they opened the door to the front and he sat with the pilots on the jump seat. And they said, I -- I -- we got word from our -- our staff that you're probably a -- a medicine man. And he said, Why? And they said, We need all the help we could get. Our -- our landing gear won't eject. And so can you help us in any way? Okay. So he sang the song. And as he sang the song, the wheels came down and they were able to land.

And so there’s many stories about this song, but I’ll sing you one part of the -- of it, and it’s a gift song for all of you that you’ll travel safe as you leave our -- our territory here.

(SINGING)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: All right. Now the real singers. These guys are the professionals, so they’re all grandsons of one of our special groups, and
many of them are passed on now, I’m not too sure how many
of -- are still around, but we -- amongst our Blackfoot
bands we have a name for each of our clubs, and this one
was called A-1 Club. These two songs that you’re going to
hear are well over 50, 100, whatever
-- however old they are, but the first one is the flag song
and it’s the song that we sing for our warriors, our
veterans. We’re just going to sing a couple starts, and
then our last song is a very special one. So you don’t
have to stand, you could kind of visit around if you like.

(SINGING)

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you. It’s
hard to -- it was hard, for a moment there, to talk to tell
you this last one. A-1 Club was a special group for a
number of reasons, and it was intended on restoring our
pride. And, anyways, the women of the Anglican charge was
gifted this song by A-1 Club. This was gifted to them some
20 -- well, 30, 40 years ago, and this is the women’s song.
And this is our final song that we’re going to sing for all
you here, and it’s a special one. It was his grandson who
made this song. (Speaking in Native Language).

--- CLOSING SONG

MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Okay. Thank you.
We -- have the best singers in the world here, so anyways,
don’t forget to call your spirits with you as you leave, so
you don’t want to leave your spirit in downtown Calgary,
there’s a lot of crazy things happen around here at
nighttime. Anyways, thank you again. I just wanted to
also say that that song is our moving camp song, so when we
move to the next camp we call for prayers and we pack up --
roll up the teepee and we move on. So good luck in
Toronto, and good luck in the conclusion of the commission.
And thank you again to the organizers and all of you all.
We love you all. Come back again to Calgary. Aho!
--- Upon adjourning at 6:00 p.m.
I, Krystle Palynchuk, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

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Krystle Palynchuk

June 1, 2018