National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 4 Closing Oral Submissions of the Parties with Standing
The Westin Ottawa - Ottawa, Ontario

Wednesday December 12, 2018
Oral Submissions - Volume 7

Aboriginal Legal Services
Native Women’s Association of Canada
Battered Women’s Support Services
Winnipeg Police Services
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
Regina Treaty Status Indian Services, Inc.
Sioux Lookout Collective
II

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Second Chairs: Violet Ford, Meredith Porter and Shelby Thomas (Commission Counsel)

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and Commissioners Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson


Eagle River Drummers: Yancy Thusky, Awema Tendesi, Jordan Jacko

Clerks: Bryana Bouchir & Maryiam Khoury

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg
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Ottawa, Ontario

--- Upon commencing at 8:33 a.m/L’audience débute à 8h33

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Good morning, good morning, good morning. How is everybody this morning? The sun is shining. It's not snowing. It's going to be a beautiful day.

My name is Christine Simard-Chicago and I'm going to be your MC for the rest of the week. And I have my colleague here.

**M. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Christian. Bonjour à tout le monde. Moi et Christine nous serons vos maîtres de cérémonie pour la semaine.

Donc on va commencer aujourd’hui avec les prières d’ouverture qui nous seront offert... en fait, avec les joueurs de tambours qui sont... qui vont être performés par le groupe Eagle River.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So right now we're going to start our day in a good way as we usually do. So I'm going to ask our elders to come up, Vince, Elaine, and Reta.

I almost feel like we can do Sonny and Cher here.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

(OPENING PRAYERS/PRIÈRES D’OUVERTURE)

**ELDER RETA GORDON:** Good morning, everyone,
and I want to say hello to Thelan (phonetic) and welcome him to the drums, the drummers.

Last week I was cleaning out my desk drawer because things were falling out, and I came across a poem and I thought how à propos this would be, so I'm going to read it.

"Oh sisters, where are you? We have searched and we cannot find you. Your spirits cry out and echo in the empty spaces you once filled. You have drifted, unnoticed into the shadows of death. Your bones lie scattered in profaned places, your absence, your tears, and your terror all ignored in a mainstream culture that considers you of no account.

Beat the drums of mourning and memory, sound them louder and louder til they become your voices, heeded by us all. May they raise in our hearts and compassion a pulse that pounds out the need to claim justice for each woman who has been forgotten and to remember her with honour and respect."
Let us heed the Great Spirit who calls us to protect and treasure all our sisters.

Please everyone, be the eyes that look to see that our sisters need us if they're in trouble and listen to their cries."

Thank you.

**ELDER ELAINE KICKNOSWAY:** So boozhoo.

(Speaking in Indigenous language) to the Commissioners, the grandmothers, and the families and the helpers. We give thanks for today and watch over and the medicine that we carry but also the medicine that is being asked to be spoken of. We give thanks for that bundle. We give thanks for that *ki giizis*, the rising of the sun and that breath of life.

We give thanks for all those that we speak to and that love that is shared and the gracefulness that comes with that love and the original teaching of the first stepping stone that we're all to receive and that we continue to carry.

Watch over our missing and murdered and our families and those places that we speak about so that we continue to carry forward the message of live, message of justice, message of answers in a good way. *Miigwetch.*
ELDER VINCENT KICKNOSWAY: Boozhoo.

Ahneen.

(Speaking in Indigenous language). We give greetings and thanksgivings to this Algonquin territory that we stand upon and that we are acknowledged and have received the warmth, the sunlight of our grandfather, who has risen in that eastern doorway. We are so grateful.

We ask at this time to acknowledge the words of our grandmothers and to our grandfathers, kokum and mooshums, to acknowledge this gathering, that we may acknowledge the use of our abilities throughout this day for what we will see here, smell, speak, taste, and feel.

To those who work so diligently in utilizing those abilities to hear and to those who speak their ways of life, we are so grateful that the resolutions of this gathering will come within the guidance of our spirit helpers, our ancestors. I acknowledge and give thanks to those who are ancestors.

I am so grateful for the voices of these young men who sing their songs, our way of life, to bring the joy within our hearts, to fulfill those ways of life that we, as Anishinaabeg, Métis, Inuit live. We ask to offer those prayers and guidance and love throughout this day. We are so grateful.
that all the people that attend this gathering, from the
east, the south, the west, and the north, we are so
grateful. (Speaking Indigenous language.)

  I've been -- we are very fortunate as a
husband and a wife, mother and a father to have our son.
He sang his songs with us in the recognition and shared
that rattle also. We are so grateful for us as a family
unit, and we ask and give thanks to this Commission, this
gathering for this opportunity to share who we are and
what we believe in to all of life's creations. Meegwetch.

  MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Meegwetch.
Thank you for that.

  Now, we'll have our opening drum song with
the Eagle River Drummers.

  M. CHRISTIAN ROCK: Merci à nos aînés pour
la prière d’ouverture. Nous allons maintenant procéder
avec la chanson d’ouverture avec le groupe Eagle River.
Merci.

  (SINGING AND DRUMMING/CHANTER ET TAMBOURIN)

  MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Meegwetch.
Now, we'll have the lighting of the Qulliq with our Elder,
Eelee, and we'll have my friend, Louise, translate for
her.

  M. CHRISTIAN ROCK: Merci. Merci aux
joueurs de drums. On va maintenant procéder avec
l’allumage du qulliq et l’allumage sera fait par Madame Eelee Higgins, accompagnée par Louise.

ELDER EELEE HIGGINS: (Speaking Inuktitut)
As I was unavailable at the end of the day yesterday, I'd like to express my thanks for Louise to take on the duty of extinguishing the Qulliq yesterday and to do the prayer. Qujannamiik.

ELDER LOUISE HAULLI: Eelee's brother-in-law, her husband's older brother, had a heart attack yesterday, but he's improving as of now so she's grateful for that.

ELDER EELEE HIGGINS: Thank you to the Algonquins for allowing us to be on their unceded territory and for the Commissioners for granting us to be here. This morning, I will share half of the Inuit traditional knowledge as I was once a principal of Joamie School in Iqaluit.

The first one I'll share is respect amongst one another and with relationships and caring for one another. Respect has a lot value for each and every one of us, and in my presence amongst all of you, I felt that respect with the call of duty I am here for.

The other one is fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming, and inclusive. Upon my entry into this room, I feel the welcome from everyone that’s in
here.

**MS. LOOEE OKALIK:** And it’s warming to her heart.

**ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** Even upon one giving you a smile, you see the warmth of that (Native words).

The third one is serving and providing for family and community, or both.

Serving one another is very common in communities, even though you may be volunteering; therefore, that adds to the wealth of the community spirit. We learnt this value from our parents and from our ancestors.

The fourth one I’m sharing is decision-making through discussions and consensus. This value has proved to be very valuable at this venue because discussions and consensus are reached through dialogues and communication.

Thank you very much.

**LOOEE:** And it’s taking longer to light the qulliq but it’s getting there.

**ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** It’ll get there.

**LOOEE:** Yeah.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** I’ll make sure it’ll get there.
LOOEE: It’s valuable that Eelee shared this as we all face the north at the current time sharing these Innu traditional knowledge values.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

ELDER EELEE HIGGINS: Thank you.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: All right. Thank you so much for that.

Right now we’ll take a couple of minutes just to -- a couple minute break, two-minute break, and then we’ll let legal take over from here.

So everyone have a good day today.

Migwetch.

M. CHRISTIAN ROCK: Donc merci à tous. On va prendre quelques minutes pour réorganiser l’avant de la scène, puis on va... en fait, deux minutes pour permettre à l’équipe légale de prendre place et de pouvoir commencer les travaux. Vous pouvez trouver les équipements de traduction simultanée à l’arrière de la pièce et on va commencer dans les prochaines secondes.

--- Upon recessing at 8:53 a.m./L’audience est suspendue à 8h53

--- Upon resuming at 9:01 a.m./L’audience est reprise à 9h01

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Good morning, Chief Commissioner Buller, Commissioner Eyolfson, and
Commissioner Robinson.

We are reconvening with submissions from the parties with standing. And the first party I’d like to invite up to the podium this morning is from Aboriginal Legal Services, Ms. Emily Hill and Mr. Jonathan Rudin.

---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. EMILY HILL:

MS. EMILY HILL: Good morning, Commissioners.

My name is Emily Hill and I’m here with my colleague, Jonathan Rudin, to speak with you on behalf of Aboriginal Legal Services. Our Anishinaabemowin name means All Those Who Speak the Truth.

I want to acknowledge that the land we’re meeting on today is the traditional territory of the Algonquin people, and we are grateful to be here.

Jonathan and I will take turns addressing you on six points today. I will speak to you about the Indian Act. Jonathan will then discuss the police and criminal justice system. I will talk about healthcare and the child welfare systems, and Jonathan will address community-based solutions.

I first want to speak with you about how we know what we know.

Aboriginal Legal Services has the benefit of working both frontline and at a strategic level for
more than 25 years. Because we’re based in downtown
Toronto and have offices in 10 other Ontario centres, we
get to work with diverse Indigenous communities, including
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from right across
Canada. Our clients are women, men, Trans, and two-
spirited people, Elders, and young people.

We learn from them every day as we work
with them, not only in the criminal justice system but
also on what are called poverty loss services. Things
like housing and Social Assistance.

And because we are also who family members
call when police don’t take their concerns about a missing
family member seriously, or when they face discrimination
in a hospital, we learn from this advocacy as well. And
we take what we learn and we share it with others.

Aboriginal Legal Services has appeared at
every level of court in Ontario, at courts in Saskatchewan
and Quebec, and at inquiries and inquests in British
Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario.

We speak to House and Senate sub-
committees, and we have appeared before the Supreme Court
more than 20 times, most recently in the Barton case
dealing with the brutal death of Cindy Gladue.

And so our submissions today reflect what
we have learned from working very closely with Indigenous
community members who are those who are most effected by the epidemic of violence against women, girls, Trans, and two-spirited people. But also from what we’ve learned working very closely with the institutions that promise, but consistently fail, to protect them.

We hope that you will hear in our criticisms of these systems not cynicism but an informed caution about the ability of these institutions to change. And, conversely, we urge you to share in our optimism and trust in Indigenous community organizations to keep people safe because this, too, is based on our firsthand experience.

And so I would like to now begin at the beginning, and for the beginning of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, it is colonialism, and one of the longest, most effective tools of colonialism is the Indian Act.

In our written submission we spend more time discussing the history of the Act but today I will simply say that the Indian Act reflects the pure racism of an underlying assumption that Indigenous people should be eradicated, combined with Victorian patriarchal ideas; a combination that has proved deadly for Indigenous women.

As a result of the Indian Act, women lost access to traditional roles of political power, and their
status became tied to their husband’s.

The Act first came into being in 1876. Since then there have been amendments to the Act to try to address the loss of legal and cultural identity when women were stripped of their status when they married out.

One such attempt was Bill C-31, which was passed in 1985 and returned status to more than 100,000 people. However, the passage of the Bill contributed significantly to the poverty and dislocation at the root of much of the violence experienced by Indigenous women today.

At the time the Bill passed, the government promised additional funding to help First Nation governments to meet the needs of their newly registered community members, many of whom returned home. But the government underestimated that number with the result that communities were woefully underfunded. They never made up that difference and the ensuing rifts have divided families and communities. And even after further amendments, the Act continues to discriminate and affect and cause harm to women and children. The National Inquiry is uniquely placed to make recommendations to end that discrimination.

It is our submission that the Inquiry must make that recommendation because every time Indigenous
women have challenged the Act -- and these are names you know, Ginette Corbier Laval (phonetic), Yvonne Bedard, Sandra Lovelace, Sharon MacIver, Lynnee Gayle (phonetic) -- the adversary they met was the Canadian government. Whatever else the government may say about their commitment to end discrimination against Indigenous women, when it comes to the Indian Act, their lawyers fight every application in every court and lawmakers only make changes when the courts say they must.

So the Inquiry has an important role to play. We've been led to believe that the government will listen to you. We urge you to recommend that the Indian Act be reformed to eliminate the hierarchy created by the second generation cut off rule. The Act currently provides that after two generations of a status parent having children with a non-status parent, their descendants lose status. The first generation receives 6(1) status with the following generation being bumped down to 6(2) and finally, the third generation loses access to registration entirely.

This hierarchy continues to perpetuate the consequences of the historical gender discrimination within the Act.

We ask for a recommendation that the Indian Act be amended to extend full section 6(1)(a) status to
all First Nations and women and their children who've been discriminated against by the exclusionary provisions of the Act. This is known as the "6(1)(a) all the way" proposal.

And we also ask that the Inquiry not only recommend the government adopt 6(1)(a) all the way, but also that you recommend that changes must be accompanied by increased funding for First Nations. It is essential that the federal government adequately fund First Nations to ensure that they can meet the needs of their newly-recognized community members. This will ensure that women and their families who are newly registered have the opportunity to truly benefit from that registration. It will also ensure that communities are not divided the way they were after Bill C-31.

These changes are an essential stepping stone on the path to safety for Indigenous women and their families.

I'm now going to pass the microphone to Jonathan.

MR. JONATHAN RUDIN: Good morning, Commissioners.

During this Inquiry, 18 of the 83 expert and institutional witnesses this Commission called worked for police forces. We are concerned that much of the
evidence you have heard has focused on the police as the solution to the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls rather than as part of the problem.

We are also concerned about recommendations aimed at directing resources to police rather than the agencies that work directly with Indigenous communities.

Families of Indigenous women and girls are often rightly sceptical and fearful of the police, based on the role they have played in their communities. This reality can give rise to a generalized distrust of police, which can mean that families are often reluctant to report people missing.

For non-Indigenous people, particularly White people, the police are there to serve and protect. They're the ones to call when you are in need or someone has gone missing. But for Indigenous people, that is not the case, and it's not because Indigenous people are paranoid or irrational. It's because their concerns and fears are well founded. They are based in history, in lived experience, and in day-to-day interactions with the police.

Indigenous women and girls are often not believed when they report violence, especially those who are engaged in sex work, and this is because, as previous inquiries have shown, the lives of Indigenous street-based
sex workers are simply not seen by police as worthy of concern.

Now, to their credit, some police forces are taking responsibility for their negligence, their disinterest, and their racism. Over the past few years, police forces such as the RCMP, Vancouver Police, and the Winnipeg Police at this Inquiry have acknowledged their shortcomings, have apologized for their inaction, and have promised to do better. And we very much hope that they do do better because lives depend on it.

But at the same time, many of these police forces insist that to do better, they need more resources, which means more money. And that money is often sought from funds that are tied to initiatives such as addressing the crisis of murdered Indigenous women and girls.

We believe the police forces should not get money that is better directed to Indigenous organizations in order to do their job properly.

In its response, the Inquiry's interim report, the federal government announced funding of $9.6 million to the RCMP's new National Investigative Standards and Practices Unit and 1.25 million to organizations with expertise in law enforcement and policing to lead a review of police policies and practices with regard to their relations with the Indigenous peoples they serve.
We should expect police forces to use the funds that they have for their core operations to ensure that they serve all of those within their jurisdiction fairly and equally. Meeting the needs of Indigenous victims and families who have lost loved ones must be part of the core business of the police. Requiring additional funds to better be able to respond to the needs of Indigenous people sends the message that it takes a special effort to provide policing services to Indigenous people. It shouldn't.

If the police can use their existing resources to find missing non-Indigenous women and girls, they can use those resources to find missing Indigenous women and girls.

If the police need better training to do their jobs, then it should come from their training budget, not from special grants from one or another level of government, grants that would be better placed allowing Indigenous organizations to do the work they do best with the people they know best.

I want to turn my attention now to the criminal justice system because the Canadian criminal justice system has caused a great deal of harm to Indigenous people and Indigenous communities. It has been repeatedly identified as a system which discriminates
against Indigenous people and from which Indigenous people
are estranged.

The criminal justice system likes to divide
people into two categories, victims and offenders. And
this view fails to take into account the experiences of
Indigenous people who have been subjected to pervasive
systemic and direct violence at institutions such as
residential schools and foster homes.

The scars caused by this violence often
result in victims causing violence to others. In this
way, victims become offenders and terrible cycles of
violence are perpetuated. Some victims of violence and
abuse turn to alcohol or drugs to numb the pain. This
self-medication can also lead to coming into conflict with
the criminal justice system.

And the Criminal Code itself contributes to
the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and
girls. While the purpose of particular sections of the
Code might not be explicitly to further endanger
Indigenous women and girls, trans and two-spirited people,
the reality is, this is exactly what they do.

The continued presence of many mandatory
minimum sentences is one area that urgently requires
reform. We know that mandatory minimums have a particular
impact on Indigenous women and the federal government
knows that too. The Minister of Justice herself has acknowledged that mandatory minimums contribute to the over-representation of Indigenous women in prison.

Mandatory minimums put women who should not be in jail in jail. These women then become further enmeshed in the criminal justice system, and once they are released, they're even more marginalized, their lives more precarious, their abilities to overcome the challenges they face even more difficult. Mandatory minimums make the lives of Indigenous women harder.

And mandatory minimums have an impact in another way. They can prevent communities from healing and from addressing the impacts of trauma. There are communities that want to deal with the impact of historic and current sexual abuse, but one of the reasons that people are reluctant to report such abuse is that what they want is community healing, not jail for the perpetrators.

If there are no options other than jail for perpetrators of abuse, then matters will often continue to stay in the shadows and never be addressed.

We must realize that there are circumstances where the threat of jail silences people rather than encourages them to come forward.

Now, to be clear, we're not saying that no
one should ever be jailed for crimes of sexual abuse, but we have to acknowledge that the proliferation of mandatory minimum sentences has not had any measurable impact on making communities safer and preventing the abuse of Indigenous women and girls. We need to be able to have serious discussions about options in the criminal justice system and we need to recognize that mandatory minimums get in the way of community healing.

Assuming that in every situation a mandatory minimum sentence has to be the response to particular forms of offending is simply counter-productive and means that jail must be imposed, even if the victim and the community are eager to help craft the sentence that will better meet their needs.

We recommend that this Inquiry add its voice to that of the TRC in Call to Action 32 and that the federal government repeal mandatory minimum sentences.

There are also those laws that are ostensibly passed to protect women but have the opposite impact. For example, the criminalization of activities related to sex work increases rather than decreases risks to safety. This is a case even where the laws are intended to help, such as the criminalization of the purchase of sex or of those who exploit vulnerable young peoples’ pimps or traffickers. Unfortunately, increasing
policing and prosecution without steps to also address the
forces that make those survival tactics necessary only
makes these problems worse.

You’ve heard during this Inquiry of the
phenomenon of dual charging, which occurs when a man
charged with domestic assault insists that his partner
started it and should be charged. Dual charging leads to
more and more women becoming enmeshed in the criminal
justice system. Police policies that grant no discretion
to officers and require arrest whenever domestic violence
is alleged are a big part of the problem. A one size fits
all approach to this issue makes the problem worse.

But the criminal justice system does not
just consist of the laws found in the Criminal Code. It
also includes the way in which people are treated by the
major actors in the criminal justice system, judges,
lawyers, victim service workers, et cetera. We know that
the criminal justice system systemically discriminates
against Indigenous women and girls who are the victims and
survivors of violence.

The most recent public example of this
discrimination is the case of Cindy Gladue. This case was
argued just a few months ago at the Supreme Court of
Canada and we hope the Court addresses the stereotypes and
racism that saw her consistently referred to as Native and
a prostitute rather than by her name throughout the jury trial which ultimately resulted in an acquittal for the man who caused her death.

In 2015 there was a justifiable outcry when an Indigenous woman in Alberta known by the pseudonym of Angela Cardinal was jailed because it was assumed by the police and judicial authorities that she would not attend court to testify against her abuser. An examination of the case found she was treated as a criminal rather than as a victim.

At that time, government and court officials were extremely contrite and news articles spoke of the uniqueness of the situation. But these situations are not unique. Indigenous women are often held in custody on material witness warrants because they are not perceived as willing to testify against their accuser or as seen as likely not to attend court. While it should go without saying that Indigenous women who are victims of violence, physical or sexual, should not be jailed because the Crown or judge does not think they’re likely to testify, it does need to be said, and not only does it need to be said, the practice needs to stop.

And even those institutions set up expressly to assist victims in the court system continually failed them. The role of victim witness
advocates is often to act as an adjunct to the Crown’s office. Their role is to prepare the Indigenous woman or
girl for trial with the result of the support offered is
not victim centered but prosecution centered. This can
mean the needs of the victim are secondary and after a
trial or sentencing is complete a victim is left on their
own with no resources for further assistance.

The other problem with victim witness
advocates is that they really are not there to advocate
for the needs and interests of victims. The attitude that
they often take is that victims are not capable of making
up their own minds about how matters should proceed
through court, and any victim who’s not prepared to see
the matter through to trial is somehow letting down the
side. This paternalistic attitude prevents the voices of
Indigenous women and girls from being heard and
discourages them from using these services.

The system needs to change so that it asks
victims what they need to be safe and how they can be
supported when they want to make changes in their
relationships and life rather than imposing solutions on
them.

ALS has had the experience of Crown
attorneys and victim witness workers expressing
frustration about Indigenous victims because their actions
did not fit with what they thought was best for the victim, without acknowledging that Indigenous women do not need to be saved but instead to be supported. We have had to advocate for victims to ensure that their goals are understood rather than ignored.

I’ll turn matters back to my colleague.

**MS. EMILY HILL:** I’m now going to address the healthcare and child welfare systems.

I cannot imagine the truths which have been shared with you over the last two years about the battered bodies of Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two-spirited people. I know you have heard about cuts and bruises, broken bones and the injuries caused by knives, guns, and violent sexual assaults, and I know that you’ve heard even more testimony about the impact that violence has on the mental health of those who suffer it.

Indigenous victims need the healthcare system, doctors, nurses, bandages, beds, x-rays, medication, just like every victim does, but too often they don’t have access to the services and supports they need, or if they can access healthcare it is a place where they experience the direct and systemic racism that exemplifies life in Canada for Indigenous people.

And once again these institutions are acting as they have always acted against Indigenous
people. In the 1940s and '50s for the Inuit medicine meant that often people were taken from their home communities to TB sanatoriums from which many never returned. Indian hospitals were used to segregate patients so they didn’t infect white patients. Students of residential school were subjected to medical experiments in the name of nutrition research. And Indigenous women were the main targets of forced sterilization, a practice that operated within the scope of the law from the 1920s to the 1970s and outside formal legislation after that.

How can we expect Indigenous victims fleeing violence to be comfortable seeking assistance from the medical community when their experience of that community is grounded on hurts and injuries inflicted at the hands of doctors and nurses, and especially when those hurts and injuries continue.

Systemic racism is deeply engrained in many healthcare facilities. The fact that many hospitals do not recognize traditional healers and make it difficult, if not impossible, for people to smudge and practice their traditions in the hospital, keeps people away.

The stereotypes that medical professionals have of Indigenous people, also keeps people away. Dr. Janet Smylie, who testified as an expert witness in these
proceedings, has written about research that shows that racism against Indigenous people in the healthcare system is so pervasive that people strategize about anticipated racism before visiting an emergency department, or in some cases avoid attending for care all together.

And the problems with medical services for Indigenous victims, is not restricted to healthcare facilities in urban centers. The lack of adequate healthcare on reserves is a national shame. According to a spring 2015 Auditor General’s report about the healthcare in remote communities in Manitoba and Ontario Health Canada did not have reasonable assurance that eligible First Nations individuals had access to clinical and client care services and medical transportation benefits.

Echoing our concern that government agencies often do not concern themselves with what Indigenous people and communities say they need, that report concluded that Health Canada did not take into account the health needs of remote First Nation communities when allocating resources.

In the specific context of violence against Indigenous women and girls, it is shocking that many nursing stations on reserves do not have sexual assault kits. The reason given for this gap in services is that
nurses have not been trained in how to use these kits. As a result, Indigenous women and girls who are sexually assaulted and want the evidence that’s in and on their bodies to be used to find and convict the perpetrators may have to wait two or three days to even wash themselves, until after they’re transported to an urban center where these kits are available. What sort of message do we send these women and girls when we require this of them? Non-Indigenous Canadians would never tolerate such neglect because nobody should have to.

Central to the recommendations we will point to in our written submissions is the need to implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 23 to increase the number of Indigenous healthcare professionals, but we also ask for a recommendation to turn to Indigenous healthcare leaders, both those trained in western medicine and in traditional healing, to provide guidance and direction about the way forward.

And this leads me to the topic of child welfare. Aboriginal Legal Services runs an Indigenous alternative dispute resolution program called Giiwedìn Anang or North Star. We help families come together with the support of traditional knowledge holders, Elders, volunteer community grandmothers, aunties and uncles, to come up with solutions that keep children safe and keep
them with their families.

An essential takeaway from this program is that Indigenous people know best how to care for, nurture, and support their children, and of course that is true, for thousands of years Indigenous communities successfully used traditional systems of care to ensure their children’s safety.

But child welfare picked up where residential schools left off. Child welfare was an effective tool to disrupt Indigenous ways of knowing and to devastate Indigenous families. During the Sixties Scoop child welfare agencies were used to impose European ideas about families and the role of children and treated these ways as inherently superior to Indigenous practices, even though the imposition on these Indigenous children was having a devastating effect.

The intergenerational consequences of the Sixties Scoop continue today and child welfare agencies continue to cause direct harm by removing children.

But often the root causes of Indigenous children ending up in the child welfare system are rooted in the poverty faced by Indigenous families and communities, and not abuse or neglect. The consequences of Indigenous communities being forced on to smaller and less productive land within their traditional territories
through the reserve system, and of chronic underfunding exacerbated by broken promises of Bill C-31, have left First Nation communities with housing crises, with water crises, with barriers to food, medical care, and schools. These barriers, direct consequences of colonialism, are then reframed as neglectful parenting requiring the removal of children.

The unceasing work of Cindy Blackstock, an expert witness called twice by this Inquiry, has shown that the crisis of overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system stems from chronic underfunding of services for First Nations children on reserve, but also from a mindset that sees child welfare authorities look at Indigenous parents and see neglect.

In urban centres, dislocation and barriers to access traditional practices can make it hard for families to get the help they need. Parents can find themselves torn when the only way to get help for a child with special needs or for a parent struggling with a mental health problem or addiction is to call child welfare, but their experience is that just such a call will result in an apprehension. This legitimate concern can lead to further isolation and secrecy, rather than help for the family that needs it. And even in cases where there are legitimate child protection concerns,
agencies fail to recognize the impact the removal of a child has on all members of a family.

In our experience the crisis and grief that the removal of a child can cause for a family is intense and cannot be resolved without a great deal of non-judgmental support and time to recover. But too often, rather than allowing space and time for this, parents are penalized for being unable to respond immediately in the midst of that crisis, and they aren't offered the supports they need.

The legal system, which supports child apprehension, marches on leaving the family reeling. The cycle often continues into the next generation, and often pushes children into the youth criminal justice system.

Tina Fontaine is the most well-known example of a young girl being removed from a community because she was identified as being at risk and being moved into a situation she was -- where she was more vulnerable to violence and was eventually murdered. But there are many more examples and there is a direct relationship between girls being taken into care and either going missing or being murdered.

The federal government has recently acknowledged that there are serious institutional problems with the way child welfare services are imposed on
Indigenous families. On November 30th, Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott announced that the federal government will be proposing legislation that would make the apprehension of Indigenous children a last resort and would stop apprehensions where the root causes of the problem are poverty.

While the Minister deserves credit for finally acknowledging the scope of the problem and for proposing steps to address the issue, we remain skeptical. The reality is that as of this moment there is no legislation before the House of Commons, and given that there will be an election called in the fall of 2019, there is a good chance that this legislation will not be passed.

There is also the not insignificant issue of the ability of the federal government to do anything substantive in this area. Child welfare is a provincial and territorial responsibility, and while the federal government is responsible for services on reserves, it has always delegated that work to others. We need more concrete information about how this new legislation will see them take on that responsibility to ensure that this proposal is more than lip service.

There is an urgent need for child advocates to be in place for Indigenous children in care. These
advocates can be there to assist Indigenous children whose voices cannot be heard. They can also be there to examine those cases where tragically an Indigenous child in care is seriously harmed or dies. This work is essential.

It's also essential that people learn about why children suffer harm while in care. This is why we submit that the Commission should recommend that all child advocates be able to release their reports to the public with necessary reductions, a practice that is currently not permitted in some parts of the country.

Recently, the Ontario Provincial Government in the name of cost savings, abolished the Child Advocates Office. While ALS disagrees with this decision, we do not think the answer is to necessarily simply resurrect the Child Advocates Office. Rather, we think it's necessary to reconstitute these offices so that there are Indigenous-specific children's advocates at both the provincial and the federal level.

It is true that in some of the provinces a child advocate with sole responsibility for looking after Indigenous children in care would mean that there would be little or no work for the non-Indigenous child advocates since virtually all children in care are Indigenous. This might make obvious the crisis we are speaking of to those who wish to ignore it.
The reform of the child welfare system needs to be of paramount concern for this Inquiry. We ask the Inquiry to recommend the funding of more initiatives like the alternative dispute resolution process that we offer and that others provide in Ontario and British Columbia. This will ensure a return to a system where Indigenous communities are able to once again use their own knowledge and practices to keep their children safe.

Jonathan will now address other community-based solutions.

**MR. JONATHAN RUDIN:** In our experience, the line between someone being safe and someone being exposed to violence is not black and white. There are shades of grey which a person may experience and move between. And some factors which are protective include connection to culture and a sense of community, and by having agency in the choices they make, even when those choices are perceived as risky by others.

For example, a young woman might choose to stay with a male friend who offers some protection in exchange for money she generates from engaging in sex work. She may face some risk in that relationship, but she may assess that risk as less than the risks she would face without that protection.

Children may be exposed to violence in the
home or the community, but because they know their family and their community, they may have developed coping strategies and ways of avoiding some of the harm that might befall them. When they are taken away from that home and placed with strangers in a strange community in order to be "safer" they are also immediately made more vulnerable because they don't have the kinship web and community knowledge to protect them.

And there are also shades of grey for those who commit violence. Many are victims of violence themselves, often physical and sexual violence, which are the legacies of the abuse suffered by many survivors of residential school. And as I discussed earlier, sometimes offenders want to acknowledge the harm they've caused and seek treatment, but the threat of criminal prosecution, even if this is not what the victim wants, prevents such an opportunity for accountability and healing.

And all of this means that when we speak of creating environments that are safer for Indigenous women and girls, we are talking about recognizing that safety is not an absolute but is found on a scale. It also means allowing Indigenous women and girls to have agency in their lives to make choices for themselves, which might sometimes include choices we may not like.

We know what actually makes people safer
does not always involve the police or the justice system or child welfare. It comes from creating the necessary infrastructure to allow people to live their lives in a safer environment.

What does that mean in concrete terms? I'd like to initiatives in three areas: transportation, addiction services, and shelter.

To start with, transportation: You know better than most of the tragic stories around the Highway of Tears in British Columbia. One of the reasons that we continue to hear about Indigenous women and girls going missing there is because there is no public or affordable transit. People living in rural and First Nations communities need and want to be able to leave their communities for all sorts of reasons, and they have a perfect right to do so. The answer to the problem is not to warn women and girls not to hitchhike, to tell them to stay in their place, but rather to provide them with safer options that they need.

The closing of Greyhound bus routes across the country is going to exacerbate this problem. Uber is not coming to the Res any time soon. Governments, federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous must either deliver these services themselves or provide meaningful subsidies to companies who want to provide these services.
If we don't this, then no amount of warning signs and cautionary tales will prevent more women from going missing or being murdered.

With respect to addictions: We know that the causes of addictions in the Indigenous community stem from the continued impacts of colonialism. We also know that the opioid crisis is having a particular impact on the community. Whether an Indigenous women dies at the hands of a killer, such as Robert Pickton, or from an opioid overdose, it is just as much of a loss and it is just as senseless a loss. We need to ensure that there are programs to assist Indigenous women and girls with their addictions.

Harm reduction: Including the use of safe injection sites is essential to stem the tide of opioid deaths. These sites can and do encourage Indigenous women to participate in more long-term addictions programming. There is a need for these programs to actually be available across the country. There is also a need for long-term treatment options in urban areas and on reserve. And we need to recognise that treatment can take many forms. While group work may work for some, it will not work for all, and we can't restrict access to treatment to just one particular model.

One of the real problems with residential
treatment is that women often have to find care for their children in order to enter such programs. For mothers without a lot of community support, that may mean placing their children with Child Welfare authorities for a period of time. And as Emily pointed out, it's easy to understand why many women are unwilling to do so.

If day programs in urban areas were more available, then we would not have to ask women to make these impossible choices.

And shelter. It's hard to feel safe if we don't have a home. And lack of shelter is a huge contributor to the dangers that Indigenous women and girls face.

In terms of permanent shelter, the federal government needs to commit to truly addressing the housing crisis on reserve. In urban areas as well there is a need for housing. There are many Indigenous housing providers in urban centres who are ready and eager to address this housing need, but they need the funds to be able to do so. Those funds have to come from all levels of government.

It is also important to recognise, as the Mental Health Commission of Canada did, that in developing housing projects, the focus has to be on housing first. Study after study has shown that, once housed, people are better able to deal with the other issues in their lives,
like addictions and mental health. And really, why should 
that be a surprise to anyone?

There is also a need for temporary shelter 
solutions. Temporary shelters are necessary for 
Indigenous women fleeing violence and also seeking a place 
to stay as they take the steps to pull their lives 
together.

As has been pointed out repeatedly, 
Indigenous women living on reserve or in rural and remote 
communities who are victims of domestic violence have very 
little access to shelters. Often these shelters are 
located some distance from their community and require 
them to leave. For many women, leaving their community, 
their supports and all their children know make it 
difficult to make that choice.

One option is to make sure there are safe 
houses or spaces on reserves, although given the housing 
crisis that exists on reserves that may not always be 
possible.

Another approach is to make sure that 
victims of violence have the option of staying in their 
homes and it’s the abuser who leaves, not necessarily the 
community, because that may not be what the woman wants, 
but he certainly should have to leave the home, and First 
Nations should be at the forefront of developing these
initiatives.

In urban areas there is a need for
Indigenous-specific shelters for women, both those leaving
abusive situations and those seeking temporary shelter.
But here too there need to be options, and particularly
options for those who are still dealing with addictions.

Harm reduction is not just a model that
should be used in addictions' treatment. It also needs to
be incorporated in shelter services.

Inquests and inquiries have shown that many
of the problems associated with homelessness and
addictions are worsened by shelter policies that prevent
people from consuming alcohol in the shelter. Shelters
that allow alcohol consumption, wet shelters, are often
very successful in reducing the harms caused by and faced
by their residents. This is a model that must be taken up
across the country.

Commissioners, you have a big task ahead of
you, but you also have the example of many Commissions and
inquiries that have preceded your work. Now, some people
have said that the work of this Inquiry is not needed,
that all the solutions have already been set out by RCAP,
by the TRC, and the many other inquiries that have looked
at Indigenous people and the justice system. But despite
all that work, all that good work, change has been slow,
if it has occurred at all. There is nothing wrong with you deciding to echo some of the crucial recommendations and calls to action from previous Commissions.

RCAP recommended significant changes to the relationship between Indigenous nations and federal and provincial governments. It has been over 20 years since RCAP reported. If you find their recommendations relevant, and we certainly do, then you should say so in your report. There is nothing wrong with repetition. It often takes people some time to hear a message and you'll be doing all of Canada a great service if you reinforce the conclusions that RCAP arrived at.

One of the crucial differences between RCAP and the TRC, and a difference we suggest that you keep top of mind, is that RCAP focussed all its efforts on recommending changes to be undertaken by the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The TRC, on the other hand, while they directed many of their calls to action to government, also set out things that non-government actors, universities, school boards, corporations, sporting organisations and individuals could do as well.

We commend this approach to you. Governments change, their commitment to issues waxes and wanes. We have seen, however, that many Canadians are
genuinely concerned with the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. Media outlets have changed the way they report on these issues. Non-Indigenous Canadians understand that this crisis is a stain on the country that they want to help erase. You can help them to do that by making recommendations or calls to action, or whatever term you want to use, that energises people in and outside of government.

We hope our submissions today and our written submissions that will follow will help you in your work. Miigwech.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Rudin, and thank you, Ms. Hill.

Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, do you have any questions for the party?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good morning and thank you both for your submissions.

With respect to policing and the funding, additional funds to police, you spoke of police broadly and I wanted to know whether or not your position on funding police forces includes Indigenous or First Nations self-administered police forces.

As you may recall, we've heard in Regina, as well as in the submissions of the First Nations
Institute on Police Governance, I believe -- I'm not good with acronyms -- but that there is chronic underfunding, under supporting and the tripartite agreements don't even bring up to par, so I'm wondering if your statement applies to those police forces as well.

**MR. JONATHAN RUDIN:** Certainly that's -- thank you for the question. Certainly we do think that it is vital that the tripartite arrangements stop being temporary and be subject to negotiations to become permanent, and also that Indigenous police forces have the opportunity to have the same level of service that the police offer.

But I think also, as was stated yesterday, those forces also need the ability to move beyond doing policing as the police see them. And so one of the challenges for Indigenous police forces is are they a police force that is staffed by Indigenous people, or are they an Indigenous police force and be able to engage in Indigenous policing. And sometimes the problem with the funding issue is that it is tied only to performing policing roles that mainstream policing services want performed.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. I don't have any other questions. I look forward to reading your final submissions.
COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Just to follow up on the question that my colleague just asked. In terms of resource allocation on policing, you spoke of resources perhaps going to other agencies. So I'm wondering if you -- perhaps it's in your written submissions, but I'm wondering if you can add anything or expand upon that, where you see resources being better directed.

MR. JONATHAN RUDIN: Well, one example is, you know, when police are asked how do we better reach out into the community. Maybe it's not the role of the police to better reach out in the community. Maybe the community knows better how to reach out in the community. So it's those sorts of things that often activities that the police sort of take onto themselves and say, "We're the ones who should do this." There needs to be a better discussion about what those roles are and who is in best position to do that.

Frankly, even keeping track of who are murdered and missing Indigenous people. That has been sort of left to the RCMP and others. It's not clear that they have any better approach. When I hear that, you know, NWAC and Stolen Sisters and all that work come up with different numbers, I'm not always -- I don't assume that the police have the right numbers. So I think just
that decision to sort of locate that important work with police is one that I think needs to be questioned and looked at. And to assume that they're the ones who should do it I just -- there's no (sic) necessarily any validity to that.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for your submissions. I look forward to your written submissions.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So, Mr. Rudin, your advocating for a complete paradigm shift in policing and the assumptions that are made, not only by police forces but also by Indigenous communities.

MR. JONATHAN RUDIN: Well, I would like to say I’m not the only one advocating that. I think what I am doing is echoing what has been said over and over and over again.

If we don’t have a paradigm shift, we are not going to have change. I mean, it’s that simple. And it may not seem simple but if we don’t do things differently then we are going to keep doing them the same. We may be more culturally aware as we do things the same, but things will be done the same.

So I think you had an opportunity. You heard examples and you’ve heard witnesses talk about what that means and I think we need some more concrete examples
because if we don’t, then we’re not going to be further

enough ahead.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Well,

here’s a question for both of you then. Is it an
either/or choice? A paradigm shift or as what some people
say, “brown- or red-facing the existing system”?

MS. EMILY HILL: We can’t ask Indigenous

communities to build their own hospitals and to replicate
government expertise that is in existing institutions that we all

rely on. And so I think that we need to acknowledge that

there will always be improvements that can be made within

institutions to provide services. But I think what we’re

advocating is to acknowledge that it is the responsibility

of those institutions to meet the needs of every community

member that they serve and they have been doing a terrible

job when it comes to Indigenous community members.

And so that responsibility is placed on

them to step up, but that we have to be very careful at
drawing the lines of what is expected of those

institutions in terms of meeting other needs that

Indigenous communities are better set to meet.

So as Jonathan said, you know, that we

heard a lot in the Regina hearings about community

initiatives to do crime prevention through engaging youth

in First Nations communities, for example, that often rest
with the police and that does not need to be a core policing role. That needs to be a community role and there needs to be opportunities within the community to support youth and do the kind of engagement that does prevent crime.

So I think right now Indigenous people in Indigenous communities, for example, in health care are ill-served when they come to the hospital and they are ill-served because they can’t access traditional health care or health care expertise within their own community.

So we need to improve both but we have to put the responsibility and the funding decisions about that into the right pots, because right now the concern we hear is that there are Parties in this Commission who are asking to be given access to additional funds to essentially do what they should already be doing.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: But to follow up on that, you just said ---

MR. JONATHAN RUDIN: I just wanted to echo one thing. When RCAP issued their report, for example, on justice, they talked about the need for two tracks. But it’s not an either/or; there are two tracks. There are reforms to the current system but there is a need for Indigenous systems.

The problem with the two-track approach has
been that no one wants to do anything on the Indigenous track and so it’s not an either/or question. But in fact, resources only go to one track. And so if it’s got to be either/or, then the “or” should be the Indigenous track. And maybe that will get people thinking about where change needs to come.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And the last question, I promise.

Some people say it isn’t just about money; it’s about authority, moving away from funding programs to acknowledging permanent funding of human rights. What is your take on that?

**MS. EMILY HILL:** I think that’s right. I think when institutions fall short, we need to look to who is the best to hold people accountable? Who is the best to challenge and to name the problems that communities and individuals are facing, and to insist on equal or equitable treatment, and to see that through?

And our experience -- because we do work in human rights fields and in the world of police complaints and in all of those areas where we try to speak up on behalf of our clients and say, “This institution is failing and we expect more, and we expect remedies.” It is our clients in the communities that we serve that can best tell us how to do that.
So I think that that’s a very good point, that along with those two tracks, that one of the things that needs to happen within the Indigenous track is building in systems of accountability that allow the power to both provide accolades but also to provide criticisms to those who are serving the Indigenous communities so that if there’s a problem with health care in the system, the community itself and community leadership can say, “We have a problem with health care in our system and here’s how we need to address it” through perhaps bringing a human rights application, perhaps being at the table when funding agreements and hiring decisions are being made, all of those places where power rests.

We need to ensure that the accountability piece lands within individual Indigenous people and communities.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay. Thank you both very much. Very inspiring submissions. Thank you.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Thank you, counsel.

Just before we invite up the next Party with Standing which will be the Native Women’s Association of Canada, we just need a moment to arrange chairs. But I also just wanted, for the purpose of the record, to
explain that this Party will be starting with an honour song so Madam Clerk, if you can not start the time until that is completed, that would be appreciated.

And on that basis I will invite the Party to make their way up. They are represented by counsel, Ms. Virginia Lomax.

---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Good morning. I would like to introduce our elder, Roseanne Martin who will be starting us off in a good way today with an honour song.

MS. ROSEANNE MARTIN: (Speaking Indigenous language)

Good morning, Commissioners. Good morning, everyone. (Speaking Indigenous language). Bonjour tout le monde.

I usually start off my prayer in my language to acknowledge the ancestors where we’re standing on unceded Algonquin territory. I’m very honoured to be able to open up with a prayer to honour all the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. And I will say the prayer in my language.

(PRAYER/PRIÈRE)

(HONOUR SONG/CHANT D’HONNEUR)

MS. LYNNEE GROULX: (Speaking in Indigenous language). Bonjour. Good morning. My name is Lynne
Groulx. I am the Executive Director of the Native Women’s Association of Canada, also known as NWAC.

I acknowledge the families, survivors, who are here with us today and who are watching, because we also are here to celebrate their strength and their resiliency.

I thank you, Commissioners, from the bottom of my heart for your work with this Inquiry and for what you continue to do to fight for justice and for change and for our human rights.

NWAC is an aggregate of Native women’s organizations from coast to coast to coast. We represent First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Much like a grandmothers' lodge, we as aunties, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, brothers, and relatives, collectively recognize, respect, promote, defend, and enhance our ancestral laws, spiritual beliefs, language, and traditions given to us by the Creator.

NWAC’s foundational research, Sisters in Spirit, was one of the first, if not the first coordinated research effort to thoroughly and respectfully document cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

We worked closely with families to gather the truths of our stolen sisters in order to support the call for action
on the national epidemic of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

NWAC recognizes the families, grassroots Indigenous activists, and organization and allied activists, and organizations who have fought tirelessly for an end to the catastrophically high numbers of violence against Indigenous women and girls and gender-diverse people. We honour the spirits of our stolen sisters and their voices of their families and their tireless fight for justice.

NWAC's submissions today will take a human-rights based approach to the many recommendations we will make to the Commission. We firmly believe that the answers to end violence and discrimination rest in the actual meaningful respect and protection of human rights.

NWAC believes in resilience of Indigenous women and girls and gender-diverse people, but the systemic and continuous violation of their human rights must come to an immediate end. NWAC firmly believes that human rights are indivisible from gender-based rights. Not only are all human rights equally inherent to all genders, specific rights may take on different meanings and different applications when analyzed through a gender-based lens. This is the foundation of NWAC's submissions today.
Our women and girls and gender-diverse people are valuable. They are resilient. They deserve safe spaces for healing such as the new healing and resiliency centre that NWAC is presently building and opening in 2019.

One of the NWAC elders spoke of such a healing centre back in the 1980s. This centre will finally be built. It will offer Indigenous women living in the National Capital area navigating services, elder services, counselling, grief counselling, and much more. It will be a safe space offering culturally-appropriate healing by Indigenous women for Indigenous women.

But we need many more of these centres. This is only one. This is only the beginning. We need these centres all across Canada, in every province and many communities. And this centre, the model of it, must be an Indigenous track. So as I heard my colleague speak just a few moments ago, how will all this actually materialize and operationalize, it must be done through an Indigenous stream, which means that transfer payments need to be done. These centres and this work cannot be micromanaged by the government. They're not -- as you said, Commissioner, they are not a program or a project; right? These are programs that are long-terms and they're human rights-based programs.
Indigenous women and girls have inherent human rights that cannot be taken away from them and must be respected. They have a right to safety and security and to live their lives free of violence. They have a right to special programs and healing programs that are human rights-based.

It is imperative that the outcome of the National Inquiry uphold the human and gender rights of Indigenous women and girls and gender diverse people and make it clear that we will not tolerate discrimination and violation of our inherent rights. We will defend our rights and we will not give up.

We thank you, Chief Commissioner, and Commissioners for your thoughtful reflection when preparing the necessary recommendations for our final -- your final report.

Nous vous remercions, Madame la Commissaire en-chef, ainsi que les autres commissaires, pour votre mûre réflexion dans la préparation des recommandations nécessaires à la rédaction de votre rapport final. Merci. Meegwetch. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Thank you to Roseanne, to Lynne, to my colleagues.

My name is Virginia Lomax. I'm legal
counsel to the Native Women's Association of Canada. I have the privilege today to be joined by these beautiful souls that you met and who are also behind me. Members of NWAC, I don't know what I would do without their support and their wisdom and their counsel.

I want to thank the Elders this morning for their prayers, and I acknowledge the sacred medicines and items in the room here with us today to remind us to do our work in a good way.

Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, I want to thank you for your attention and for your listening, not just today but throughout this process. I hope that what we bring to you today will help to shape meaningful and actionable recommendations that will oblige the Canadian State to act.

I also want to thank Commission counsel and Commission staff for all of the work they've done and the hard work that they must continue to do. And I thank the health supports in this room for taking good care of us this week and throughout this process.

And finally, I want to thank my colleagues of the family coalitions and those Parties with Standing who are here today and those who are not, who have such valuable insight and experience and information to bring to this process. Your passion and your -- and your
resolve for justice will continue to inspire me into the future, and it has been nothing short of an honour to walk so closely with you all on this long and difficult journey.

And so Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, in some ways this feels like we're coming to the end of a marathon, but we're not. I think we're in the middle of this marathon.

And I want to begin today by speaking to you about where this marathon started. And the starting line, it was not at the beginning of this Inquiry, it is not when the Inquiry was called. It had nothing to do with any election. This marathon began with colonialism and genocide. But it will not end there. Not if we have anything to do with it.

We've heard so much evidence on the colonial violence and the harm that it has caused to Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people. And every institution in Canada is predicated on colonialism, on genocide, on patriarchy, and on racism against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

And the Inquiry has witnessed the evidence of these impacts of colonial violence on numerous state institutions, including the child and family services, policing, healthcare, education, law, and justice, and
corrections, and government in all jurisdictions.

And when a state is built on genocide and colonialism all of its institutions will uphold racist, patriarchal, colonial perspectives and motives, and achieve those outcomes. And so when state institutions themselves are violent towards Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people, it is no surprise that these institutions not only condone violence but they dictate the public narrative in the broader society.

And so this is a marathon that we have been running for a very long time. Maybe even 150 years or more.

We have to offer our gratitude, and our honour, and our unwavering respect and support to survivors of violence and to the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, who have spoken truth from experience, who have been exposed and re-exposed to trauma throughout this process, to identify exactly where this marathon began and what must change within these violent systems to find an end to violence against Indigenous women and girls and gender diverse people.

And NWAC firmly believes that the process to get there must put families first. And this means that the Canadian State must recognize its systemic and institutional role in perpetuating and condoning violence
against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse
people, and that puts the Canadian State in debt to
survivors and to families.

So first and foremost, NWAC calls for a
reparation fund to be established for survivors of
violence and for families of missing and murdered
Indigenous women and girls. And beyond this reparation
fund, aftercare costs, travel costs, and all costs
associated with participation in this Inquiry must be
fully reimbursed.

And I want to put a major emphasis on
aftercare because we have heard from families just within
the last few days that they are still waiting for
aftercare, and that must be provided to them.

But NWAC also acknowledges those families
and survivors who have not participated in this process,
either by choice or because they could not access the
process or were left behind. Participation in this
Inquiry must not be a pre-requisite to receive
reparations.

The Canadian State's debt can never be paid
in full, but that does not mean that they should not try
or that they do not have an obligation to do so. The
Canadian State started this marathon, and they must now
address their role as we look toward the finish line.
So where are we now?  Are we in the middle?

I want to believe that we're past the halfway mark.  I want to believe that we're closer to the end than we are to the beginning.

And I believe this because of the work of grassroots Indigenous women, the activists and organizations who have done so much work to raise conscious awareness of the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women, and girls, and gender diverse people. And it is because of their work that we can even be here to give recommendations to a National Inquiry today.

And so in its final written submissions, NWAC provides the National Inquiry with 61 recommendations to address the epidemic of violations, and I will discuss these recommendations today more briefly in the context of institutions predicated on racism, patriarchy, and colonialism.

I will first turn to a recommendation directly to the Commissioners. Throughout this process, NWAC has argued for a National Inquiry that puts families first, and this includes the conceptualization of the drafting of your recommendations in your final report. NWAC recommends that the National Inquiry place an emphasis on recommendations given by families and survivors in the course of their truth-telling, and
furthermore, the Canadian State must pursue and fully implement recommendations given by families and survivors in the course of their truth-telling.

And I'll now turn your attention to recommendations regarding child and family services. NWAC recommends that the National Inquiry emphasize recommendations that favour Indigenous and community-led child and family support services that provide supports to strengthen families and keep them together and move away from colonial, state-led child apprehension. And further, an emphasis must be put on the important role of extended families in keeping families strong and keeping families together.

NWAC recommends that the Canadian State's renewed role in child and family services is one of support through stable and adequate funding. And only through funding that is stable and adequate for Indigenous communities will self-government be truly supported and empowered.

NWAC further recommends that Indigenous and Two-Spirit, LGBTQ+ youth must be engaged in community-led development of clearly identified safehouses. NWAC calls for a full investigation into the deaths of Indigenous and two-spirit LGBTQ plus youth in foster care, state care, and group homes.
I now want to turn your attention to mental health supports and addiction supports.

NWAC recommends that the National Inquiry draft recommendations on health services that are consistent with Indigenous self-governance. Stable and adequate funding promotes Indigenous and community developed and led supports that address individualized and unique needs of each community, and this is particularly true for northern rural and remote communities.

NWAC recommends stable and adequate funding for Indigenous and community developed healing centres, and these centres must provide a holistic wraparound approach to healing that is accessible at all times to community members, and this includes mental health, physical health, addiction support, employment, and family strengthening programs.

I want to emphasize that communities may need support but they have the knowledge keepers, they have the wisdom, they are the experts in their own experience to develop these centres, and the role of the government is one of support and standing behind communities rather than being the brick wall in their way.

Recognizing that Indigenous people will also need to access public hospitals there must be funding and safe space created for traditional healing and for
Elders in public hospitals.

And now I want to discuss necessary legislative and institutional changes.

Although we go into more detail in our written submission, NWAC recommends extensive changes to colonial legislation and institutions that shift governance focus to Indigenous self-governance.

In particular, NWAC recommends changes to policing and justice institutions that promote the safety and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

And it is also imperative to seek closure and justice for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

NWAC further recommends external and Indigenous and community-led oversight of all settler and colonial institutions that will provide any of these services or that will interact with Indigenous women, girls, gender diverse people, their communities and their families.

And now I want to address a gap that we have noticed in the evidence gathering process of this Inquiry, as there has been a distinct lack of inclusion of incarcerated Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people. This is particularly important because of the
severe overrepresentation of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people in prisons and also the high levels of abuse survivors in prisons.

Specifically, NWAC recommends that Correctional Services Canada immediately cease all use of solitary confinement and administrative segregation. We’ve noticed a tactic that they will say that they are going to change this practice and then just call it something different, but the practice of solitary confinement, by whatever name CSC chooses to call it, must immediately cease.

And further, NWAC calls for an end to routine strip searches, a clear violation of human rights with devastating impacts on survivors of abuse.

NWAC further recommends the Canadian state fund Indigenous-led and community autonomy over the use of Section 81 agreements in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. Indigenous communities must be able to non-institutionally manage corrections and criminal justice responses in a manner that respects the rights set out for them in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Charter. This must not be imposed on communities by people external to their communities.

NWAC recommends that the Canadian state
provide stable and adequate funding to Indigenous women’s
groups in their communities so that Indigenous women,
girls, and gender diverse people with their chosen
representatives in their communities will lead specific
and individualized resources for the reintegration of
Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people
released from prisons.

I will now speak about education and
educational systems.

NWAC recommends that all schools in all
jurisdictions at all levels develop, design, and implement
curriculum that is accurate, ongoing, and meaningful in
addressing racism and sexism and discrimination against
Indigenous women and girls and gender diverse people, and
in order to do this properly there must be an equal
partnership with Indigenous women and girls and gender
diverse people.

Canada is the only circumpolar country
without a university serving northern residents. This
must change, and these institutions must be developed by
the communities in the territories on which they will
exist.

And these recommendations are aimed at
increasing the numbers of Indigenous women, girls, and
gender diverse people in educational systems, and in order
to do that these educational efforts must include
Indigenous and community-led initiatives to combat racism, sexism, and sexual violence in educational institutions, because if we are going to increase the number of women in educational institutions those places must be safe for them.

I will now discuss a bit more of some of NWAC’s recommendations for stable and adequate funding.

NWAC argues that all recommendations to do with funding programs and services and other initiatives for Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people must be stable and adequate and led by Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

Funding that supports true self-government does not follow the current top down colonial models that require Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people to prove that their lives are worth research and funding. This new model cannot pit Indigenous communities and organizations against one another for the same allotted funding. We see this as a divide and conquer strategy that keeps hegemonic colonial power in place. Funding must be given in a way that gives total discretion to Indigenous communities and organizations in partnership with the women, girls, and gender diverse people of many nations.
I will now turn my attention to specific recommendations to respond to two-spirit LGBTQ and gender diverse peoples’ safety.

As an organization that applies a gender-based and culturally relevant and intersectional lens to its research, its policy development, and its advocacy, NWAC recognizes that Indigenous two-spirit and LGBTQ+ people are distinctly impacted by systemic discrimination.

NWAC makes numerous recommendations to enhance the safety and equality of two-spirit, LGBTQ+ individuals, including gender diversity, education initiatives, inclusive programs, and interventions that will combat isolation and stigma.

NWAC recommends effective policing strategies in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people, and two-spirit, LGBTQ people to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

NWAC recommends the collection of disaggregated data, because responses based on data that does not account for the distinct and unique experiences of different groups cannot hope to account for the safety of those groups.

NWAC recommends appropriate and safe shelters for two-spirit, LGBTQ youth in rural, remote, and northern communities.
And NWAC recommends that the Canadian state adopt intentional and mandatory measures within their own institutions to show respect for proper and chosen pronoun use.

And finally, NWAC calls for a coroner’s inquest into the deaths of Indigenous two-spirit and LGBTQ people, particularly those in foster or state care.

And it is of deep importance for the Commission to consider the recommendations for implementing UNDRIP. I will now discuss those.

NWAC recommends that all of your recommendations that you draft for this final report be drafted through an UNDRIP-based lens, and this means that all recommendations must respect the inherent rights contained in UNDRIP and the indivisibility of those rights from gender-based human rights.

There is a legal obligation on the Canadian state to adhere to inherent rights contained in UNDRIP and the Charter when considering any and all legislation and programs that will impact the rights and lives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

The Canadian state cannot ignore this obligation to uphold human rights, and that is particularly true when they’re drafting, reviewing, and implementing legislation.
And so now I want to bring you back to the marathon analogy. How do we get to the end of this marathon? I think that a lot of people already know and will tell you that no matter where or when the finish line is, UNDRIP is the map that we must follow.

And so I'm asking you today, Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, use this map. The recommendations you draft must reflect the rights in UNDRIP, the rights to self-determination, the rights to self-government, the right to participation in decision-making processes that influence and impact the lives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, and the indivisibility and the inalienability of those rights, from gender-based rights, the rights of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, to participate in decision-making processes through their chosen representatives.

It is also necessary that through the recommendations you help to bring about this renewed relationship between Indigenous Nations and the Canadian state that must recognize that self-government is key. We recommend that all existing legislation and policies be reviewed through both an UNDRIP-based lens and a gender-based lens.
This means that all programs and all services for Indigenous peoples must be led by Indigenous peoples. The time for the Canadian state leading is over. Anything less is the by-product of a colonial mind.

NWAC argues that the government's role is one of support through funding and that the government cannot tell Indigenous people how to spend this funding. I want you to imagine for a moment a situation in which a defendant has caused catastrophic harm to a plaintiff, and the evidence has demonstrated a link between the harm and the action or the omission, a causal link, if you will, and the defendant is found to owe damages.

This is a common principle, not just in Canadian law; I would argue that this is a common principle to most legal orders. It's trite law to say that you must put a plaintiff back in the position that they were in as much as damages are able.

But I cannot imagine a legal order in which it would be considered just for a plaintiff to have to enter into a contract with the defendant where the defendant determines and dictates how the plaintiff may use damages. But yet, the Canadian state sees this as justice for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. That is unconscionable.

The Canadian state is directly benefiting
from resources on stolen land, and then they are contracting that benefit back to Indigenous people under strict terms for how the Canadian state wants it used. In no uncertain terms, this is not self-government. This is colonialism unfolding today.

This Inquiry has seen mountains of evidence of the direct impacts of colonial actions and omissions on the diminished safety of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. And the Canadian state owes reparations to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people and their Nations. And it is not up to Canada to dictate how those reparations are spent.

And this is especially true for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people because the Canadian state is not only benefiting from stolen land; they are benefiting from stolen and displaced power. The Canadian state is benefiting from the displacement of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people from positions of power and respect in their communities.

The Canadian state's colonial history displaced Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people from representation in the decisions that affect their own lives and now the Canadian state cannot dictate who represents Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in their own reclamation of power.
And so in conclusion, NWAC firmly believes that Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, with the support of their families, the communities, their organizations, their Nations, and their allies, and this Commission, they will not just finish this marathon, it will be won.

And what I have said in these oral submissions is simply a glimpse and a more detailed recommendation set that NWAC has provided in its written submissions, but it is important to focus on the overarching theme today. How do we get these recommendations to a point that they are meaningful and that they are actionable, and that the Canadian state meets its obligations?

We recommend that all of the recommendations contained in your final report set out clear, actionable, achievable goals that can be reported on and tracked independently through an Indigenous-led tracking system.

These recommendations must remind the Canadian state with each and every recommendation that they have obliged themselves to true self-governance as protected through UNDRIP and also as adopted through Bill C-262.

We remind the Canadian state through these
recommendations that there isn't just one legal authority on this land; there are many, and a true Nation-to-Nation framework respects legal pluralism on this land. A true Nation-to-Nation framework respects the international nature of a Nation-to-Nation relationship that the Canadian state claims to want with Indigenous people.

And we tirelessly remind the Canadian state through these recommendations of its direct influence in displacing Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people from their places of power in their Nations, and that this reclamation of power can only come from Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

And we tirelessly remind the Canadian state through these recommendations that it is their obligation to review existing legislation and policies and draft future legislation and policies through an UNDRIP- and gender-based lens, recognizing legal pluralism on this land.

And we remind them through every single recommendation of all of these things, and we gear up to hold them accountable.

So NWAC calls on you, Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, to draft all of your recommendations with the finish line in mind, self-government in equal partnership with Indigenous women, girls, and gender-
diverse people properly returned to their roles of power
and respect in their Nations.

   Chi-miigwetch.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Ms. Lomax, and thank you, Ms. Groulx.

Ms. Lomax, I understand that you have provided the Commission with a two-page summary of the recommendations on behalf of NWAC. I'm going to ask at this time if you'd like to make that two-page summary an exhibit?

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Certainly. Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So the two-page summary will be Exhibit 8, please.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. Thank you, Chief Commissioner.

--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO. 8:

Summary of recommendations provided by Native Women’s Association of Canada
(three pages)
Submitted by: Virginia Lomax, Counsel for Native Women’s Association of Canada

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: At this time, I'd like to ask if Chief Commissioner or Commissioners, if you
have any questions for the Party?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good morning.

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Good morning.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good morning to your colleagues and thank you for being here.

I have so many questions, but I want to stick to one, being mindful of my time, and I'll trust that your written submissions will be comprehensive.

In terms of an examination of all laws, policies through an UNDRIP lens and through a gender-based lens, with the finish line being self-governance, self-determination, and a return to power and place, I can't -- I want to know if we were talking all laws you include the Canadian Constitution in that?

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Yes, I would say that this means any law, any law that would impact the lives of Indigenous people, Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And the Constitution, particularly the division of powers, being so fundamental in defining who has power and place in this country that UNDRIP and a gender-base analysis and for the finish line again to be actualized, constitutional reform would be an imperative?

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Yes, it would be an
imperative and that is because only two forms of
government are formally recognized in the Constitution.
There must be third-order government or more.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And in your
mind, at this point, does section 35 sufficiently
recognize that and protect it?

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: No, I think if it did
sufficiently recognize and protect it, we would have it,
but we don't.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Those are my
questions, and I very much look forward to your
submissions. Meegwetch.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I don't have
any additional questions. I just want to thank you very
much for your very powerful submissions, and also for your
-- all of your contributions throughout the hearing
process and your thoughtful questions. I also want to
recognize your colleagues and thank you for the song as
well. Chi-meegwetch.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:
Ms. Lomax, I don't have any questions, but I certainly
look forward to reading perhaps more than one time your
written submissions. So thank you.

Ms. Groulx, thank you, and to your
colleagues, thank you as well for coming today and
enriching our process.

Ms. Lomax, it's been a pleasure working with you. You are nothing less than an inspirational advocate. Thank you.

MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.

Chief Commissioner, we're scheduled now to have a morning break. I will take your direction on how long you would like us to take. We are scheduled back at 11:00 a.m., which would at this point give us about a 23-minute break.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Twenty-three (23) minutes please.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Perfect. Thank you so much.

--- Upon recessing at 10:37 a.m./La séance est suspendue à 10h37

--- Upon resuming at a.m./La séance est reprise à 11h00

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, the next party I'd like to invite to the podium is from the Battered Women's Support Services. And making submissions on behalf of the Battered Women's Support Services will be Summer-Rain and Jennifer Mackie.
--- FINAL SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS FINALES PAR

BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES:

MS. SUMMER-RAIN BENTHAM: So I'd like to start by acknowledging that we are gathered here today on the unceded territories of the Algonquin people and to express my gratitude for being allowed to gather here today on this territory for the purpose of the closing submissions for the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I would like to acknowledge the sacred items placed before me, the Elders who opened the day, the Commission and the Commissioners for allowing me to be here today to speak, and to all of the family members and survivors who have participated and shared their truths with this Inquiry.

Battered Women's Support Services was established in 1979. We have taken action to end violence against women and girls. This action includes direct services for survivors, systemic, and institutional advocacy, and law reform.

Our approach is proactively de-colonial from the understanding that if we want to understand violence against women in Canada, we understand the role of colonization, colonization both here in Canada and extending to all the regions of Mother Earth. Because
from the 1400s to the 1900s, 85 percent of the world land mass was colonized by European power through which ideologies and actions, specifically, delineated a gender binary, subjected women and girls, while stratifying a one race and class.

Battered Women's Support Services is not a single issue feminist organization. Our work extends to redress social inequalities and social constructions in subjugate. Battered Women's Support Services responds to over 11,000 requests for services annually, and for 15 years we've had a Indigenous women's program developed and delivered by and for Indigenous women.

Based in Vancouver, with the shared territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, Battered Women's Support Services takes actions in all ways where colonization grinds down in the lives of women and girls.

I would like to at this time hand it over to my colleague, a member of our board of directors, Jennifer Mackie.

**MS. JENNIFER MACKIE:** Good morning. My name is Jennifer Mackie. I'm from the Frog Clan of the Carrier Nation on my mother's side, and Scot on my father's side.

My family is from Fort St. James, which is
located in the north central of British Columbia, and our family's traditional territory is located north on Chuchi Lake, which is located in the Arctic Headwaters.

I would like to acknowledge that I'm an uninvited guest here on these lands of the Algonquin peoples. I refer to myself as uninvited because as an Indigenous person I acknowledge that there are protocols to follow when entering someone else's territory. I did not engage in these protocols, so I thank the Algonquin peoples for tolerating my presence while I am here. I promise to walk gently.

I live in the unceded and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, and Squamish peoples. I am also currently a second year law student at the University of British Columbia.

I was invited to present to you today, along with my friend and colleague, Summer-Rain, as a member of the Board of Directors for the Battered Women's Support Services, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today. I thank you for your time.

BWSS prepared several recommendations as part of their final submissions, but for today I would like to focus on one, that of what I see is the erasure of Indigenous women by the Canadian State.

I come from a matrilineal society where
women were the owners of our traditional territories. Land was passed from mother to daughter, aunties, cousins, mothers, we all had land within RKO (ph). And so the success of the Canadian State could only be realized through the subjugation of Indigenous women.

Laws passed by the Canadian State facilitated those disruptions of our relationships within and between our families, our clans, and our nations, but most significantly, these laws disrupted our relationships to our lands and territories. Residential schools, the creation of Indian reserves, the inability to hire a lawyer to protect our land interests, and so on, these were all created by the Canadian State in order to sever the ways in which we are interconnected, the ways we related to one another.

But the Canadian State has not been successful; however, it is persistent. In Ontologies of Indigeneity, Kwakwaka'wakw scholar, Sarah Hunt, turns to the work of Dene scholar, Glen Coulthard, who describes these politics of recognitions in which recognition, like assimilation, serves to reinforce the dominance of colonial power, and as such, is not a viable way to transform the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples in Canada. From this I wonder whether the Canadian State along with its various agents and actors in
recognition of its role in colonial violence against Indigenous peoples will result in any significant change.

We hear the rhetoric of a new relationship, or the rights recognition framework from various faces in the political realm, and yet I think about my friend, Warner Naziel, hereditary chief of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, who, along with his partner, Freda Huson, seek to regenerate their Indigenous laws and relationships within the land in which they live, regenerate their Indigenous laws and relationships in the Unist'ot'en Camp in Northern B.C. They were recently served by the energy company, TransCanada, who is attempting to build a pipeline through their traditional unceded territory.

I also think about Mayuk Manuel, a Secwepemc woman arrested in a consultation event for the federally owned Trans Mountain Pipeline. She and others were detained for disrupting these closed door meetings. Upon her arrest, she stated, "I am not mischief, I am Secwepemc".

These and other acts of resistance continue to be criminalized by the Canadian State. Indigenous peoples continue to resist is contemporary acts of colonialism to prevent the further erasure of our legal traditions or systems of governance which form the foundation, and guide how we relate to one another, and
are rooted in the land.

Leanne Simpson describes these, and other acts of resistance, as a physical disruption of settler colonial commodification in ownership of the land through the implicit assumption that they are supposed to be there. She adds that this is a necessarily -- necessary and critical intervention in the hyper-individualism that we are exposed to in western educational contexts which are designed to negate our inherent relationality. By rebelling against the permanence of settler colonial reality, she writes, one no longer just dreams alternate realities, but actively creates them on the ground, in the physical world, in spite of being occupied. This is about land. The land is the source of our songs, our dances, our stories, our languages, and our bodies. Without the forceable removeable of our bodies from the land, the legitimacy of the Canadian state is placed into question. Without the forceable removable of Indigenous bodies from the land, there can be no access to land, water, and settlement.

I grew up along Highway 16. I’m connected through friendship and nationhood to persons who lost loved ones, family members, from the communities along this road. Indigenous people spoke out about women who were going missing and were met with little to no
response. These disappearances are one example of the
ereasure of Indigenous women from our lived realities.

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang write in their article, Decolonization is Not a Metaphor, how settler
colonialism requires the destruction and disappearance of
Indigenous peoples. We must be erased. We must be made
into ghosts. One of the less overt ways in which this
happens is through our codification representation in
research. We are, as Indigenous peoples, codified as at
risk, or asterisks peoples. In that, as at risk, we are
described as being on the verge of extinction, culturally
and economically bereft, engaged or seem to be engaged in
self-destructive behaviours, which can be -- which can
interrupt our school careers and seamless absorption into
this economy. As asterisks peoples, we are represented by
an asterisk in large and crucial data sets, many of which
are conducted to inform public policy that impacts our
lives. As peoples, we may make up four percent of the
population of this country, yet we are lumped into single
categories, erasing our unique identities due to the
unavailability of health and education statistics for
various reasons.

The lack of information about who we are
and where we come from represents a form of denial of our
existence. In the criminal justice system, police do not
ask for this information. Perhaps, when someone is visibly Aboriginal, they may make a note. Detailed information is not requested at this early stage. At the sentencing of an Indigenous offender, identity matters.

The over representation of Indigenous women in federal penitentiaries represents a more recent form of erasure I would argue. The number of women who end up prisons has more than doubled in the past ten years. This is a new and improved form of forceable -- forceable removal of Indigenous women from their traditional territories. According to Senator Kim Pate and the work of the Elizabeth Fry Society, many of these women in particular plead out, so there is no trial. Many are also dealing with complex health issues intersecting concurrent issues that the prison isn’t be -- incapable of supporting. This denial, this invalidation of the lived experiences, the injustice this erasure -- or erasure -- my erasure.

Tuck and Yang explain that decolonization as a metaphor allows people to equivocate those -- these contrary -- contradictory decolonial desires because it turns decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation. In reality, the tracks walk all over the land and the people in settler contexts. Decolonization in the settler colonial context must
involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the
recognition of how land and relations to land have always
been differently understood and enacted.

As your work comes to a -- a close, and I
thank you for the opportunity, I hope that there is a
shift in these conversations about who we are as peoples,
as women, and that there is a significant shift in power
in understanding who we are as peoples, that there’s a
regeneration of our loss, there’s regeneration of our
identities, and there’s a regeneration and restructuring
of those relationships with each other. Thank you.

**MS. SUMMER-RAIN BENTHAM:** So my name is
Summer-Rain, and I am Gitxsan, meaning people of the misty
river. I am from the house of the raven and the Raven
Clan from Kitwanga on my mother’s side, and I am Coast
Salish from the Squamish Nation on my father’s side. I
live and work on the unceded Coast Salish territories of
the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. I am
currently the Manager of Indigenous Women’s Programming at
Battered Women’s Support Services, where I have the honour
and privilege of working with Indigenous women and girls
who have experienced all forms of gender-based violence,
and the impacts of colonization at many different levels
and at many different times in their lives.

Sorry. I’m here to speak in relation to
the gender-based violence, racism, hatred, and continued colonization that Indigenous women and girls face continuously every single day while the Canadian state passively stands by and perpetuates their failure to respond to the safety of Indigenous women and girls, thus making Canada, in whole, aiding in the deaths, murders, and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls.

The ideology of Indigenous women and girls’ bodies as rapeable is brutally evident in the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. This attitude or belief is entrenched by Canada’s policing agencies and systems which have historically and currently been a brutal force of oppression and perpetration of violence against Indigenous women and girls. Furthermore, the general response of the police to the murders and disappearances of our women and girls is to blame the victims by arguing that they are -- they are or were sex workers, and hence inherently rapeable, often referring to the fact that they are willingly choosing a high-risk lifestyle.

The concept that women are not worth more than their bodies is entrenched into our society, even in our justice system. This leads to an attitude or belief that men who inherently have a position in society that allows them access to women, power, and access to
resources, people, and influence to do or effect what they want. Men, as individuals and as a group, hold varying degrees of physical, economic, and political power over women and, in particular, Indigenous women and girls. Sexual assaults and rape is a way that men enact unequal power. Ending the demand or entitlement of men to the sexual access of the bodies of Indigenous women and girls and placing full responsibility on the men can and will interfere with their sense of entitlement and access to Indigenous women and girls’ bodies.

Indigenous women and girls are forced to leave their reserves and migrate into more urban settings to escape extreme poverty and violence in their homes and on their homelands. Indigenous women and girls face a particular form of misogynist racism. Indigenous women are forced to leave -- live in dangerous intersections of gender and race. Indigenous people have become marked as inherently at risk of violation through the ongoing process of sexual colonization. By extension, their lands and territories have become marked as a way to violate as well.

The connection between the colonization of Indigenous people’s bodies, particularly the bodies of Indigenous women and girls, in Indigenous lands is not simply metaphorical. We are adamant that there is a
connection between patriarchy’s disregard for nature, Indigenous peoples and women, and the colonial patriarch combine that seeks to control and dominate. In fact, this is proven in the fact that Indigenous women and girls are going missing and being murdered right here where we stand today, all across the country, and even across the world.

And what is Canada doing about it? What is preventing Canada to follow through on any of the hundreds of recommendations they have already received or on the promises they have already made to Indigenous women and girls to Indigenous communities. That would mean that Canada as a state would have to take responsibility for the racism, patriarchy, misogyny, and violence that is committed. They would have to take responsibility for the impunity they have created for men, predominately white men, to view and treat Indigenous women and girls as disposable and as not worthy of life.

The child welfare system, originally referred to as residential schools and day schools, primary role for education of Indigenous girls was to inoculate patriarchal norms into Indigenous communities, to disrupt our matriarchal systems to interfere with and destroy women’s power, roles, and agency; this continues to happen.

Canada’s current child welfare system
continues to cause great harm to Indigenous women and girls. They issue birth alerts and flag our children at birth for removal and place with non-Indigenous families, depriving and stripping our children of their culture and identity and as Indigenous peoples.

Our girls’ encounters with child welfare system too often result in an increased lack of safety which escalates to experiences of violence, sexual assault, exploitation, disappearances, and deaths while in the so-called care of our child welfare system.

Our Indigenous girls are grossly overrepresented in the child welfare system; in foster homes, group homes, shelters and single-room occupancies, and on the street.

Indigenous women and girls are classified as high risk, or living a high-risk lifestyle, yet the only true high-risk lifestyle any one of us lived or lives is that of being a girl or a woman and that of being a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit girl or woman.

As Indigenous girls and women we are taught and trained at birth by our mothers, our aunties, our grandmothers, that we will be targeted and attacked by men, not only because we are women and girls but because we are Indigenous women and girls. And yet the state continues to perpetuate and/or ignore the violence,
poverty, and unsafe conditions of Indigenous women and girls. The state continues to remain silent, leaving ourselves, our sisters, our aunties, and our daughters to face these men who choose to attack us because we are Indigenous women and girls alone in the fight for our lives.

Indigenous women and girls have a long multi-generational history of colonization, marginalization, and displacement from our traditional homelands, languages, food, culture, and history. All of these things have been stolen from us and replaced with Western world traditions of poverty, violence, abuse, and addictions, leaving Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous women and girls, extremely vulnerable to male violence.

This continues to be perpetuated with Canada’s failure to address the sexism and gender discrimination to women and girls in the Indian Act, which only furthers the colonial and patriarchal constructs that have consistently fueled the exclusion of Indigenous women’s voices since the creation of the Indian Act.

I myself, not like -- not unlike many Indigenous women and girls, were born into poverty and violence. I was a product and a part of the child welfare system my whole life, a system where I was nothing more
than a file lost on someone’s desk.

I was born in a very small community up north. When I was little, my Mum and my grandmother that I had these bright blue eyes and fair skin; they truly believed I wouldn’t experience the heinous acts of violence that both of them had experienced.

My grandmother was a residential school survivor. My mother was part of the sixties group and struggled with addictions and mental health.

They were wrong. I was targeted by men since the age of two and experienced violence from almost every man who came into my life, because to these men, and to the state, I was an Indigenous child. No matter how light my skin might be or how blue my eyes are. Because these men -- and I want to be clear, the men I refer to were mostly White men -- they knew there would be no consequences for the harm done.

I was bounced around from home to home across the north and the lower mainland. I left the last group home I was placed in in Vancouver when I was nine years old. I spent a chunk of my life, 14 years, on the streets of the downtown eastside, trying to find where I belong, where I would be accepted. Because of colonization I wasn’t Native enough for my Mum’s family and I was too Native for any White family.
Eventually, I found my own and I had amazing, strong Indigenous women warriors in my life who taught me who I was, where I come from, and how important my voice is.

This is why I am alive today and why I am able to do the work I do today. This is why I speak, not only as a frontline antiviolence worker but as a family member and as a survivor.

I was taught as a young child that our way of sharing, of teaching was through storytelling, and that is why I have chosen to intertwine my personal truth with my political message as the two are inseparable for me.

I know you have heard throughout these hearings and in Calgary hearing, that it is mostly Indigenous men who are committing the violence against our Indigenous women and girls. From my 15 years of frontline experience and my 35 years of life, I would strongly disagree with this statement. I would go so far as to say it is a grossly unfair reading of history to blame Indigenous communities alone for the state of crisis across this country.

This is not an Indian problem. This is a state -- a Canadian state problem as the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls continue to rise and largely remain unsolved on reserves, in cities,
towns, and communities across Canada.

To say it is our problem alone makes it easier for the White colonial state to say it’s our problem, and for the rest of society to accept this answer. I refuse to, and I ask you to refuse to.

Over the past 55 years approximately 4,000 Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or were murdered in communities across Canada, yet the government, the media, and the Canadian society continues to remain ignorant; a refusal to recognize the names and families who have lost someone.

The RCMP list a mere 1,200, yet the Indigenous women on the ground, the women walking across Canada, the women who walk the streets every night, they have 4,000 names.

If there were 1,200 White men went missing in the last 55 years, it would be the front page of every paper, the headline on every news outlet. We would all have the images, faces, and names of these men drilled into our heads; the government would not let us forget these men. And I can only imagine if 4,000 White men were missing; the world would come to a halt until we found out what happened to these men. Yet when it’s 4,000 Indigenous women and girls, their names remain silent; their families remain uninformed; their pictures shown on
posters or in media are that of a mugshot because, once again, Canada’s message to Indigenous women and girls, and to the rest of society, is that of disvalue, of disposable, of good riddance.

During this Inquiry, the team at Battered Women’s Support Services had the opportunity to walk the Highway 16 from Prince Rupert to Smithers in memory of Tamara Lynne Chipman, a young Indigenous woman who went missing from this stretch of highway. This highway, which now known as the Highway of Tears, where families have recorded over 32 Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing.

This stretch of highway that I was born on in the middle of nowhere is a stretch of road that runs from Rupert to Prince George. Indigenous girls and young women were going to missing along this stretch of highway, barely causing a ripple in the media until a young White woman went missing from the same stretch of road, and then her disappearance was all over the media while our young girls were ignored.

The whole community came out to search for Nicole; billboards were put up with her picture, posters were made and distributed, media interviews were conducted, yet Indigenous warrior women in the community were fighting to have pictures and billboards of their
loved ones put up. They were met with resistance, disrespect, and a level of hatred.

I walked this road for five days. It was dark and silent and heavy; I could feel the weight of the girls on me as I walked. I could hear their cries. It was one of the first times in a long time I realized just how alone I was in this world. And I wondered, yet again in my life, that if I went missing right here, right now from this road, would it matter?

In Vancouver, more than 50 women went missing from the city’s downtown eastside. Sixty (60) percent of these women and girls were Indigenous, and most were young. These are women living in extreme poverty. Some, if not all, struggled with drugs and alcohol, and many were victims of childhood sexual abuse. Every one of them grew up in foster homes.

In other words, their lives were all the markings of the violence and victimization of colonization.

There is a growing list of missing and murdered Indigenous women in B.C. The February 14th memorial march has over 550 names of women and girls on their memorial list. Many of these women lived what many would classify as that high-risk lifestyle, which is a polite way of saying the police, the state, and the
community saw these women as disposable and not worthy, yet at no fault of their own. They were poor, homeless, struggled with addictions, maybe in sex work. Most importantly, they were brown women and girls so the state and the justice system could look the other way.

Too many of our women are currently left in highly dangerous and increasingly more dangerous situations. These reasons cannot be used to abandon our Indigenous women and girls to gender-based and often hate-fuelled violence anymore.

The torment of waiting for answers by families is only deepened every time a White woman’s disappearance triggers a flurry of national media coverage and attention.

Grim statistics and anecdotal evidence compiled by the Canadian press suggests public apathy has allowed predators to target Indigenous women and girls with near impunity for as long as the colonial state has been in existence.

The record also points to the ugly truth behind the political and legal lethargy which is racism.

The police departments and RCMP stand accused of ignoring the disappearances of our most valuable young Indigenous women and girls who go missing across Canada in numbers so large, only to be forsaken by
a jaded justice system and neglectful media.

I know this to be true. From 9 to 24, I was reported as a missing child, youth, and adult 23 times. The police left me in unsafe conditions with adult men and on the streets to fend for myself. When I received my MCFD file a few years back there were 18 out of the 23 missing persons reports were still unclosed, so somewhere I'm still listed as missing.

I'm not sure, in my opinion, if it was ever -- if I was ever found by them or if it was easier for them to leave me unfound.

Battered Women's Support Services receives 11,000 calls a year from self-identified women and girls, and I have come to learn that not only are the police responding inadequately to cases of male violence against women entirely, but their lack of effective response allows for the violence women experience to continue happening.

More recently, in Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montreal, we have been dealing with Martin Tremblay, a White man who targeted and recruited young Indigenous girls out of group homes, youth shelters, and the streets. He would look for young vulnerable Indigenous girls and offer them drugs and alcohol, a place to party, or a place to stay if they did not have one.
He would load them into a car, drive them
to a new house or location not close to transit, feed them
drugs and alcohol. He would mix drugs in their drinks,
making a noxious substance, and when they would pass out,
he would sexually assault or rape them, while videotaping
the attack.

In all, we know of 103 young Indigenous
women attacked by this man and his comrades.

He is currently in jail waiting for his
dangerous offender hearing, but how many lives and how
many young Indigenous girls had to be attacked by this
White man before this happened? A hundred and three
(103).

When Indigenous women's lives are
considered dispensable, then the likes of Gilbert Paul
Jordan, Robert William Pickton, (Inaudible) and Martin
Tremblay, and many, many more men come out and attack
without fear of any consequences and with impunity.

Right now, there are hundreds if not
thousands of Indigenous girls caught up in a racially-
polarized world. What has and is happening to Indigenous
women and girls in this country by the conscious act of
the Canadian state is appalling. It is no longer our
crisis; it's Canada's crisis and Canada should be
embarrassed because I no longer have the time to spend
being embarrassed. It takes every minute of my energy to
stay a proud Indigenous warrior fighting to stay alive in
this world that insists on hating me.

I am here to say that no Indigenous woman
or girl is disposable. I am not disposable. No one in
this room is disposable. My life matters along with the
life of every single person in this room. I will not be
silenced any more and you cannot be silenced any more.

As Indigenous women, we are resilient. We
are rising up. We are fighting back against the continued
genocide of our women and girls. We will rise stronger.
Our women and girls are the future and this genocide is
for the purpose of ecocide and it needs to end, to clear
the land and gain full access to the resources by any
means necessary.

As we gather here today on occupied
Indigenous territory, I invite you all to reflect back on
all the conditions of colonization that affect our young
Indigenous women in our lives today. I am calling on all
the women in this room to stand and fight with me, to
realize that none of us are free until all of us are free.
This means that no White woman is free until all
Indigenous women and girls are free to live a life without
racism, violence, death, and the threat of our
disappearance. (Native words).
(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Rain, and thank you, Ms. Mackie.

Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you have any questions for the party?

COMMISSIONER QAJAC ROBINSON: Thank you for today, for your submissions, for the many times you have stood at the podium and asked questions as well through this process, and helping us understand what we're hearing, helping us learn what it is we need to learn, but also what the rest of the country needs to learn. I raise my hands to you and thank you, both of you.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I don't have any questions. I just want to say thank you very much. Thank you, both of you for your submissions, and Summer, thank you for your sharing and your very powerful story and submissions and for all your work contributing to the Inquiry. Thank you very much.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: You can tell when we're moved because we don't talk much. Ordinarily we talk more. It's because Summer, once again, you've moved us and reminded us of what's important.

Ms. Mackie, thank you so much for your submissions today as well. It's important to put this in the context of your work as well.
So thank you both for moving us beyond words. Thank you.

**MS. SUMMER-RAIN BENTHAM:** (Native word).

**(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

**MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** The next party I'd like to invite to the podium to make their submission is Ms. Kimberly Carswell. And Ms. Carswell is making submissions on behalf of the Winnipeg Police Service.

---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL:

**MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL:** Good morning, Chief Commissioner, Commissioner Eyolfson, Commissioner Robinson. As has just been indicated, my name is Kimberly Carswell and I am pleased to appear before you on behalf of the Winnipeg Police Service.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people, and I thank them for their stewardship of this land long before the coming of the settler populations.

I'd also like to acknowledge, given this will be my last opportunity, the Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples of Canada for their contributions to the country we now know as Canada.

I acknowledge the spirits of the murdered
and missing women, girls, and the families, also the
grandmothers, elders, prayers, and songs, the lighting of
the quilliq, and the sacred items in the room.

I'd like to acknowledge the assistance of
NFAC and the health supports as well as all the Commission
staff throughout this process who have made my job and
others, Parties with Standings jobs much easier as we've
gone through this journey together.

As the Commission knows, the Winnipeg
Police Service sought standing and obtained regional
standing in all three phases of the Inquiry. The Service
believed that having a large urban Indigenous population
and with the city with the reputation of being referred to
as "Ground Zero for murdered and missing women" that it
was important that we take every opportunity to
participate in the essential work of this Inquiry.

Although we did not take an active role in
the examination of witnesses, preferring to leave the time
for grassroots questions and listening to the answers, we
were present at eight of the nine hearings, only missing
the hearing in Iqaluit in parts 2 and 3.

In addition, we had a team of
representatives available in Winnipeg and we attended
almost every truth telling in the city. We would like to
acknowledge all of the evidence that's presented by the
expert, knowledge keepers, institutional witnesses and, in particular, the families and survivors who attended and provided their truths to the Inquiry.

We recognize it took tremendous courage for those witnesses to come forward and share their experiences not only with the Commission, but with all of Canada.

We have listened very carefully to the concerns raised and the evidence related to best practices, and I can tell you that after each hearing, I have taken that information back and briefed the police executive, and my client has been very interested and has begun to review a number of its practices and policies in response to what it has heard, and in some cases we have even completed some of the changes, such as the implementation of a family contact forum that will be rolled out in the community shortly.

That being said, we recognize that there is still much work to do, but we believe that we have embarked on the right path.

We want to make it clear that none of what I will say takes any issue with the lived experience that has been shared by survivors and families throughout this process in the Inquiry. However, we would ask that the Inquiry consider those truths within the context of the
time of the incident in which they're being related.

As you may recall from the evidence in both Calgary and St. John's, the Winnipeg Police Service is not the same police service it once was, and it is making improvements in a number of areas to be more responsive and respectful to the indigenous population that it has jurisdiction.

Policing, like all government institutions and all -- in fact, all non-government institutions, evolve, and we believe that we are now moving in good direction.

The Commission, and we, have heard many truths that did not reflect on positive experiences with police. And although we accept those and the Chief acknowledged them in St. John's, we ask you to keep in mind that there are also many police officers who have treated indigenous women and girls with respect and been responsive to their needs. Not all members can be addressed with the same condition.

Finally, I want to thank the Commission for giving the Winnipeg Police Service the opportunity to participate with Ma Mawi at the hearing in St. John's focus on what we believe is promising practice that we've embarked on.

We recognize that the time afforded you to
study the many important issues was limited, and we are
honoured to have been allowed to present evidence to you
of one of our practices.

In my submission today, I want to very
briefly, because of time limits, place Winnipeg and the
Winnipeg Police Service in a historical context and
discuss some of the key policing themes that have been the
focus of your interest as demonstrated through the panel
topics that you've chosen to hear evidence on.

Many of the areas I will touch on have been
dealt with in greater depth in our written submission that
was filed earlier this week.

We believe it is important to recognize
that all police services are not the same. Issues can be
faced by them that are vastly different. Geography,
available resources, the mandates that they have,
community differences all impact on the type of services
that are required and may be available.

The Commission has heard much evidence from
people all over this country that there are different
circumstances, concerns, interests and forms of
relationship that indigenous communities have with
government institutions, and we believe that the status of
those relationships also affect the service's ability to
perform for their community.
There have also been presented a variety of options on what are the key solutions and some of the issues that Canada and various institutions face in its relationship with indigenous individuals and communities. We believe that there's no absolute standard policing solution, and we ask you to consider that your recommendations be framed in a way to not be overly prescriptive to police agencies and provide them with flexibility to implement them in a way that works best for their community. And as Ms. Redsky pointed out in her evidence in October in St. John's, she noted best practices taking place, and I quote:

"Out there like in Manitoba, like in British Columbia, and there are strategies that are in place. Just copy them, just use what -- tweak it to make it work for your region." (As read)

And we suggest to you that there are going to be differences that are necessary just by virtue of geography and the other factors that I've indicated. The Winnipeg Police Service was faced with acknowledging issues earlier than many jurisdictions with its indigenous community through the evidence that was heard in what was then called the Inquiry into the
Administration of Justice and Aboriginal Peoples, or the Aboriginal Justice Inquiries that's become known. That was called in 1988, and resulted, as you know, from concerns that related to the death-murder of Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas, Manitoba and the shooting death of J.J. Harper in Winnipeg.

As well, there were issues with respect to the Manitoba justice system's treatment of indigenous peoples.

The findings of that inquiry, which were issued in 1991, contributed to the improvement of practices around many policing issues, including police-involved incidents, investigations into police misconduct, and it also shed light on racism towards indigenous people by public institutions in Manitoba.

Many of the recommendations from the Aboriginal Inquiry were responded to by the Winnipeg Police Service in the aftermath of that report. And some of the notable things were that there was an employment equity plan with targets, dates and remedies that was in place by 1996.

There was targets for the numbers of indigenous police officers, and what the service did was set a representational goal that the police service should be reflective of the community and, at the time, 8.4
percent of Winnipeg was indigenous and the service reached
an 8.8 level with respect to indigenous officers.

I will address this later, as it remains an
area of concern for us in recruiting and retention of
indigenous persons.

We developed lateral entry candidate so
that police officers from indigenous or RCMP forces could
enter the Winnipeg Police Service easily, and that was
implemented in the year 2000.

The entry examination and assessment of
officers was changed to test for racist attitudes, and the
focus of background investigation became to, in addition
to the other things, uncover racist attitudes, workplace
harassment policies, and other policies were instituted to
cover racial discrimination, amongst other forms of
discrimination.

The recommendation was that indigenous
officers not be restricted to positions in the core or,
quote, indigenous areas of Winnipeg, and that was and is
consistent with Winnipeg Police transfer and promotion
policies.

Indigenous members are allowed to pursue a
career in their preferred area of interest and lead from
where they are comfortable. Indigenous members today are
spread throughout the organization in investigative,
administration and community divisions.

That report became a catalyst for changes that continued and continue to today, the different speed of implementation throughout that time, but there has been a consistent move forward because of that realization from that report.

I'd now like to speak to some specific investigational policies and practices that have been the subject of the Inquiry's interest.

First, homicides and fatalities, which are arguably the most serious investigations taken up by police. And I can tell you that officers from those units feel a profound responsibility of those investigations.

The unit is made up of very highly-experienced and trained officers, with minimal standards to apply to even do that. They devote themselves to solving cases regardless of the circumstances, the individual's life or death, and we have numerous examples for you in our written submission.

The Winnipeg Police Service is very proud of its solvency rate, which sits at 92 percent compared to a 74 percent average nationally, and for indigenous females that rate is 94 percent.

The Winnipeg Police Service has had a Historical Homicide Unit in place since 2001, which is now
staffed with 3 officers. It's tasked with reviewing historical investigations with fresh eyes to determine new avenues of investigation to pursue and to prevent against tunnel vision in investigations.

I know that the Inquiry has heard much about the project Devote in Manitoba, which was implemented in 2009 by the Province of Manitoba, the RCMP and the City of Winnipeg Police Service, with first a taskforce that reviewed 84 investigations that were unsolved, and identified 28 investigations involving exploited persons that were then taken up by an expanded taskforce known as now Project Devote. One of those cases has since been resolved and others are being pursued with some promising avenues. We suggest it is a policing initiative that is a promising practice and might be looked at in other jurisdictions.

Our Missing Persons and Counter Exploitation Units you heard of in St. John's through the evidence of Ms. Redsky and Ms. Willan and Chief Smyth. That unit was, as you heard, combined in 2017 to expand the amount of coverage and to work on providing synergy in the connected issues between the Missing Persons and Counter Exploitation. Unfortunately, Winnipeg, as you also heard, has the unenviable reputation of the high number of missing people, over 5,000 a year, and most of
those being youth in Child and Family Service's care. And
Chief Smyth spoke I think eloquently on those tragic
numbers in St. John's.

We implemented counter exploitation teams
and you heard about those. Those are non-enforcement
teams that go out and do community outreach with
individuals on the street to provide references to support
and resources. And you heard the evidence of them
building relationships with exploited women and girls,
even when they're not ready to connect with those
resources and supports and to identify women who may be
being trafficked and assist them.

The focus of that unit, as well as others
I'll speak about, is on collaboration with grassroots
agencies, such as Ma Mawi, Street Reach, Ndinawe, to name
but a few. Not only in having the relationship, but in
conducting joint projects with them and sharing
information to achieve a common goal. And you heard about
Project Return in St. John's between the grassroots
organisation and police to bring missing children home.

Our enforcement has been focussed on
exploiters and traffickers since the early 2000s. And you
heard that there's regular project work being conducted
and continues to be conducted to this day, unlike some of
the other jurisdictions where we've heard that it has
Winnipeg Police Service policy reflects that a missing person report can be taken regardless of the jurisdiction the person went missing in. And we looked back to the early 1980s and could find no evidence that our policy ever required a waiting period of any kind before reporting a person missing.

The Winnipeg Police Service also has a dedicated Sex Crime Unit. Our unfounded rate is 2 per cent compared to the national average of 19.4 per cent.

The Winnipeg Police Service already had systems in place to review reports where there were no charges laid. And members are dedicated to that work to — again, much like a homicide cold case, to review files to determine whether there are other avenues that could be pursued. That unit also works with hospitals and clinics and has developed protocols for sexual assault investigations, specialised trauma-informed practices for all crimes involving sexual violation.

The unit also maintains information on the internet for victims walking through the process of reporting to dispel misinformation about what that will entail and demonstrating visually the steps that reporting will entail and what will happen if an individual chooses to report a sexual offence.
Manitoba is the third province in the country to have third party reporting, and that was instituted recently, with reporting being allowed to two Indigenous culturally appropriate agencies, Heart Medicine Lodge and Sage House, as well as clinic.

The Commission has heard much evidence on domestic violence and I'd like to speak briefly on that. Manitoba unfortunately had a number of reviews following tragic incidents involving domestic violence, which considered both policing and the administration of justice. The Peddler Review, the MacKay Inquest in 1992, the Lavoie Inquest in 1995 pointed to improvements that could be made by police and justice officials in dealing with domestic violence. And, again, the Winnipeg Police Service responded and changed as a result of those recommendations.

Officer training was increased and content changed to properly equip members to recognise the problem of domestic violence and act accordingly. There was, in effect, what is often wrongly called "zero tolerance", but charges were to be laid where Criminal Code guidelines were met.

The policy required mandatory reporting, even in those cases on domestic incidents where there were no charges filed or no arrests made, for incident tracking
purposes so that members would have a complete history of complaints with respect to a family. And other areas of policy were strengthened to provide improved response.

Our justice partners created a more rapid and coordinated response to address the issues of the cycle of violence, which included supports offered by other agencies.

The Winnipeg Police Service currently has a Domestic Violence Coordinator, whose job is to provide assistance, oversight, training and education, as well as service the Winnipeg Police Services' point of contact for its partnerships in this area. There are specialised domestic violence investigators that are based in our downtown and north end districts to cover complex investigations in the city.

And you have heard much evidence on the process or practice of dual arrest and dual charging in domestic violence incidents. Winnipeg Police Service policy does not permit this practice. Members must determine the dominant aggressor and charge that person. Only where members believe grounds exist for dual arrests are they permitted to submit the matter for Crown opinion first before any charge can be laid. That is a practice that has been in place for 14 years at the Winnipeg Police Service.
The Winnipeg Police Service, through its other divisions, has continued to foster relationships with various Indigenous communities. We have had a Victim's Service Department in place since 1982. It is now made up of two officers, three civilians, a social worker and dozens of volunteers. They work in collaboration with Manitoba Justice Victim's Services section to provide resources to survivors and families, as well as information, referrals to specialised services, which include culturally appropriate Indigenous healing supports.

Federal funding for the Family Liaison Unit worker, who has been embedded in this unit, has been very useful and helped our investigators understand the perspectives of families with MMIWG and to forge better connections with them. The Winnipeg Police Service does not hesitate in saying we would like to see that continue and, in fact, expand through long-term sustainable funding.

One of the recommendations that has been a theme at the Inquiry has been the removal of victim's services from policing agencies, and that those services be placed in culturally appropriate victim survivor-led services. We believe that this suggestion should be explored. However, we have to caution that there are
going to be access to information issues that are going to have to be overcome in order to make it work, but that shouldn't stop us from examining the practice.

We agree that there need to be an examination of federal and provincial privacy legislation to address the information sharing concerns that will result from such action; and further, we believe that such examination should include the families and survivors, as well as police to ensure that the needs of all the parties are met in providing those effective and crucial services to victims and survivors and their families.

The Winnipeg Police Services had an Indigenous partnership section since the early 1990s, which acts as a liaison between Indigenous organizations and community members and police as required. They also provide safety presentations to new Indigenous community members. And you heard Chief Smyth speak on that in St. John's briefly. The importance of services like the Eagle Transition Centre to this unit are critical. And again, you heard Chief Smyth recommend the funding of those types of services in a long-term sustainable way to enable to assist us, to assist the community.

The outreach section also assists in the recruitment of Indigenous officers, coordinates Indigenous cultural training awareness for recruits. We also have a
school education section made up of 10 members and a
supervisor who provide visible presence in schools,
particularly in high risk areas. They are the ones who
present on various topics to our young people to increase
awareness and enhance safety, including sexual
exploitation and drug awareness.

We have a community support unit that
provides foot patrol, boots on the street in high risk
areas with a community-based relationship approach. And
again, we've provided more information on that in our
written submission.

The Thunder Wing Block-By-Block Initiative
is another initiative of the Province of Manitoba and the
City of Winnipeg Police with community organizations. In
an identified area of the city, we have taken the model
from Prince Albert, which originally came from Scotland,
and created intensive wraparound resources for family
within that area to provide them with the resources they
need in the place they are currently at.

Our diversity section is currently engaged
with the 2SLGBTIAQ community in reassessing our search
policy which currently already allows for split searches.
They are also engaged in enhancing and changing policy on
the interaction with that community who are Two-Spirit and
transgender, to ensure officers treat them respectfully,
use appropriate names, and proper pronouns.

We have also instituted required diversity training to all members with a focus on an experience from a member of that community which is rolling out now to all members of the police service, both civilian and police.

We were the first Canadian city to be part of the UN Downtown Safety and UN Safe City Strategy which is aimed at reducing sexual violence against women and girls.

In November of 2015, the Government of Manitoba passed the Restorative Justice Act and police have been rolling out and working through that legislation with the Province of Manitoba on diverting charges with respect to youth and adults for minor cases. There are established policy guidelines, diversion to culturally appropriate agencies selected by the Province of Manitoba.

The Winnipeg Police Service has determined to roll out the initiative slowly to be able to closely monitor and evaluate that project. It is currently available in Division 13, which is the north end of our city, and will be expanding to Division 11, the downtown in 2019.

I'd now like to speak about our recruitment and training. As you heard in St. John's the Winnipeg Police Service Strategic Plan is committed to having a
service that's reflective of its community. In that
recruitment, we have committed with our police board that
each class be made up of at least 15 percent of Indigenous
persons. That's for officers. The past three recruit
classes have exceeded that target and reached 20 percent
of Indigenous people in our recruit classes.

Recruiting activities are undertaken by
partnering with Indigenous community organizations and
participating in recruiting fairs outside of the City of
Winnipeg in places like Kenora, Sagkeeng First Nation,
Black River First Nation, and other specialized events in
Winnipeg.

We know that there are barriers to
recruitment faced by Indigenous people and as a result
conducted a number of focus groups with potential
applicants to identify those barriers. We then developed
a study guide to address the identified barriers and
provide in-house orientation to familiarize potential
applicants with the entrance exam and also the physical
abilities test. And in fact, we permit them to take that
test so that they know the standards they have to meet.
We have targeted specific groups, particularly, women,
Indigenous people, and newcomers in the hopes of bringing
higher numbers of those groups into our service.

The Winnipeg Police Services had training
on Indigene cultural awareness since the mid-1990s. And
the Winnipeg Police Service is privileged to have Elders
who assist us to teach about ceremonies, teaching and
tradition, the history of residential schools in the 1960s
Scoop, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, and the history of
Indigenous people in policing in Manitoba, the challenges
of transitioning to an urban environment, and as well, the
social and other services available for Indigenous youth
and adults.

In 2015, the Winnipeg Police Service
instituted a required, fair, and impartial policing course
for all of its members, both police and civilian. That
was training by exposure to bias awareness, confronting
our own biasing, and policing our own misperceptions about
the people we are exposed to. And I can tell you on a
personal note it was eye-opening. This is evidence based
training and is discussed in greater detail in our written
submission.

We've recently instituted changes to our
mental health crisis training in two components. The
first is to focus on increased verbal de-escalation
techniques in our use of force recertification for all
members, and the second is specific mental health crisis
de-escalation techniques which was developed by pro
training with the assistance of the University of Alberta.
That training exposes officers to a sensory experience of a psychological break and uses scenario-based training to reinforce appropriate actions.

The City of Winnipeg also has mandatory training from the TRC recommendations. Two programs. One for supervisors, one for all other staff, and this training is required as well for all police and civilian staff.

The Winnipeg Police Service since 1989 has used the Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation, a North American agency, as it recognized its policies and practices were not subject to sufficient oversight. There are audits every three years to ensure that service policy, practices, and procedures, as well as recruitment, training, and other standards are up to date and reflective of best practices in North America.

COLEA also invites community participation in providing input on police service performance. Winnipeg Police Service is proud that it was re-accredited in 2017 for the seventh consecutive time.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today, but primarily thank you for the opportunity to participate and to listen and learn from the knowledge keepers, experts, families, and survivors, who have given us so graciously of their time
and expertise. Some of these stories have been very difficult for police to hear, but we recognize they are important, and further, necessary for us to hear in order for us to continue to improve.

As Ms. Redsky said so eloquently in St. John's, "relationships take time", and in Winnipeg, we believe that the results of the work in building these relationships is beginning to show. And we ask you to consider not only the evidence of Ms. Redsky, but Ms. Willan and Ms. Anderson from Calgary regarding the efforts being made by the Winnipeg Police Service to respond and build those relationships with community.

We want to ensure you that we know that this doesn't mean we can stop now, and we recognize that the work must continue. And we believe we must work collectively with our Indigenous partners so that we can continue to improve and address the root causes of violence and increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

We have listened carefully to the concerns raised and suggestions made at this Inquiry, and I can tell you the police executive commits to continue to listen to the voices of the Indigenous people.

We look forward to your final report and to study and consider the recommendations that relate to our
mandate to allow us to continue to improve and provide
better service to our community.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Ms. Carswell.

Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you have any questions for the party?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I think we’re still in the morning. Good morning.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Good morning.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I don’t have any questions. I want to thank you for your presentation. I also want to thank you for assisting and facilitating Commissioner Eyolfson and I going ---

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: You’re quite welcome.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: --- on a ride-along with the Counter-Exploitation Unit following the St. John’s hearing, and having an opportunity not only to see the work of the unit but also to see the interactions with Ma Mawi and the community-based groups that are trying to support the community as well.

So I want to thank you for that. It was an eye-opening experience for me and I learnt a lot. So
thank you.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Thank you for attending that.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I don’t have any questions. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your submissions and for your final written submissions, which I’ve begun to review, and echo the words of my colleague, and I thank you for facilitating our visit with the ride-along. Much appreciated.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: It was my pleasure. Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Ms. Carswell, thank you. I just want to clarify one thing because I may have misheard you.

The mental health crisis training, the de-escalation course.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: That’s online as well as one full day in person, and then an additional full day for everyone, or is the second full day optional? Maybe you can help me with that.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: I don’t believe it is optional. I believe it’s part of the training as we’ve laid out in our written submission.
So there’s the two components, the use of force, that would be separate, and then there’s the ---

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay, now I’ve got it. Thank you.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Okay.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.

Ms. Carswell, thank you so much. Thank you for your participation through many, many stages here of our work. It’s been a delight to get to know your clients as well.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So thank you for your ongoing advocacy and very strong representation for your clients. It’s much appreciated.

MS. KIMBERLY CARSWELL: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.

Chief Commissioner, we are ahead of schedule. We are, at this point in time, ready -- or scheduled to have lunch but we are, according to the daily schedule, to come back at 1:40.

I’ll seek your direction but I would take liberty to suggest, perhaps, that we take an hour and a bit and return back at 1:15 as opposed to 1:40.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Will the
parties this afternoon be able to accommodate that change?

  (SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: I’m just canvassing the room to see if they’re in the room at the time.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yeah.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: We have the Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations and Regina Treaty Status Alliance. Yes? I see. Ms. Beaudin? Okay, so she’s not able to move up to the 1:15? Okay, she’s not here right now.

So perhaps we should stick with the daily schedule and reconvene at 1:40, then.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes. It’ll be a win/win.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Okay, thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We’ll reconvene at 1:40, please.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Okay, thank you.

--- Upon recessing at 12:11 p.m./L'audience est suspendue à 12h11

--- Upon resuming at 1:41 p.m./L'audience est reprise à 13h41

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Could I ask that the doors over here be closed, to limit the sound?

Thank you.
(SHORT PAUSE)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Good afternoon, Chief Commissioner and Commissioners.

The next party I would like to invite up to the podium to make submissions is from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations; Vice-Chief Heather Bear is the representative that will be making submissions on behalf of that party.

---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR VICE-CHIEF HEATHER BEAR:

VICE-CHIEF HEATHER BEAR: Well, first of all, on behalf of all of us, I give thanks to our Creator; acknowledge our Creator, and to the Elders who rendered the prayers for us today.

Good afternoon, Commissioner Buller and Commissioners of the National Inquiry. I am honoured to be here on behalf of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Saskatchewan First Nations Women’s Commission.

The FSIN represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan and is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of treaties entered into more than a century ago between the First Nations and the British Crown.

The Women’s Commission exists within the FSIN governance structure and is the recognized political
voice for the advancement of First Nations women and children’s rights in Saskatchewan.

The Women’s Commission is comprised of women who are chiefs, tribal chiefs, and members of the FSIN Senate. If we know and understand our traditional values, we know that Indigenous women have special roles as life-givers and keepers of our culture and our traditions.

Women are also instrumental in providing guidance to their respective nations, which they did at the time of Treaty negotiations.

The Crown entered into Treaties 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 with the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, and the Nakoda Nations in the territories that the FSIN and the Women's Commission represent.

The oral and written text of Treaties are foundational to the Canadian state and must be implemented in a way that honours their true spirit and intent, which includes the principles that Indigenous women and families would continue their ways of life and prosper.

However, as you’ve heard and as you presented in your interim report, the impacts of colonization and Eurocentric attitudes expressed in Indian policies have worked to denigrate and displace Indigenous women from their esteemed positions.
The ongoing effects of colonization and the Indian policy must be directly addressed by the Canadian state, working in concert with Indigenous peoples. Indigenous women must be afforded security and protection as promised in Treaty and stated in the international conventions. Measures must be taken to implement the United Nations CSW57 for the elimination and the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

It provides an action plan and breaks it down into four Ps: protection of human rights, prosecution of offenders, prevention of violence, and provision of services to victims and survivors.

Protection of human rights. The first pillar is protection of human rights. Women's rights are human rights. The Canadian state is absolutely obligated to uphold the civil liberties and the fundamental human rights of Indigenous women as they do for all Canadians.

According to the International Centre for Research on Women's Violence against Women and Girls, violence among -- against women and girls is among the most universal and pervasive human rights violations affecting at least a billion women across the globe. Indigenous women are seven times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous Canadian women.
As Indigenous peoples, we feel the effects of this rampant violence against women in our homes, in our schools, and in our urban areas. We see the negative effects and the outcomes in the Child Welfare system, in safe shelters, in youth detention facilities, in prisons, and in the high number of our women and girls who are missing or who have been murdered.

At this time, I would like to thank the families who have had the strength and the courage to stand up to this injustice despite their tremendous loss and their tremendous grief.

It is the families that have been at the front lines organizing searches, marches, and vigils year after year. Collectively, they have been the conscience of the Canadian public and the federal and provincial governments. Their efforts and those of the hundreds of volunteers across the country have been the heart and the soul of this movement that acknowledges, honours, and respects the memories of the mothers, daughters, sisters, aunties, and relatives who left us far too soon, and those they are still searching for.

Their efforts brought about this Inquiry. We lift up honour and thank the families for that.

Men have left us too, as well as LGBTQ2S individuals, and we mourn their losses as well.
We hope for a better future where every human being is respected and honoured and does not live in fear of their fellow citizens.

In order to effect change, we must empower women and girls, men and boys, to challenge and change the norms where gender stereotypes, everyday sexism, and rape culture are commonplace; where violence against women is accepted; where Indigenous women are viewed as expendable and are targeted by predators because they are Indigenous and because in Canadian society, the lives of Indigenous women are valued less than other women.

But violation of our women doesn’t take place only at the individual level. It is also perpetuated by police agencies and the State of Canada. In 2015, Human Rights Watch responded to the calls, to calls from Indigenous women and non-government organizations in Saskatchewan for an investigation into police brutality towards Indigenous women. They undertook research and released a submission to the Government of Canada in June 2017 on police abuse of Indigenous women in Saskatchewan and failures to protect Indigenous women from violence.

They documented dozens and dozens of accounts of police neglect when domestic violence was reported, as well as inappropriate and invasive body and
strip searches, sexual harassment, and physical assault.

Indigenous women reported a deep mistrust of law enforcement and fear that they would face retaliation if they filed a complaint against a police officer.

The FSIN and the Women's Commission endorsed the findings and recommendations and formally presented the report to you, Chief Commissioner, in July 2017.

We noted that it was referenced in your interim report and we thank you for that acknowledgement.

Today, we call on you collectively as Commissioners of the National Inquiry to go beyond acknowledgement and ensure your final report includes recommendations directed towards police violence and abuse towards Indigenous women.

We support Human Rights Watch in calling for the implementation of all recommendations made to Canada in 2015 under the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

This endorsement includes all recommendations that directly implicate the police, including recommendations dealing with data collection, inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional cooperation, increasing the number of female and Indigenous police
officers, strengthening police complaints mechanisms,
improving access to the justice system, improving victim
services, and taking measures to eliminate institutional
stereotyping of Indigenous women.

We endorse all other recommendations made
by Human Rights Watch including establishing an
independent special investigation unit at the provincial
level for reported incidences of serious police
misconduct; establishing detox facilities and alcohol
management programs where medical and Social Services
personnel care can provide appropriate care in a
culturally-sensitive way; ensuring that complaints are
protected from police retaliation; ensuring that police
forces have knowledge about Indigenous history, the legacy
of colonial abuses including policing abuses and human
rights policing standards; improving police training and
the escalation on de-escalation; ensuring prompt,
 thorough, and respectful police responses to allegations
of violence against Indigenous women; ending body searches
of women and girls by male police officers and ensuring
that any searches are fully documented and reviewed by
supervisors and commanders; prohibiting all strip searches
of women and girls by male police officers; ensuring that
women in custody are ordered to remove their bras only in
exceptional circumstances; ensuring that there is
sufficient number of female officers to conduct searches and ensure the safety and security of female detainees; in situations of intimate partner violence, ensuring charges are laid against the dominant aggressor and avoid dual charges against both the victims and perpetrator of violence; and with the guidance of the Indigenous women leaders and in cooperation with Indigenous organizations, establishing ethically-appropriate data collection protocols, to make available to the public accurate and comprehensive race and gender disaggregated data that includes an ethnicity variable on violence against Indigenous women as well as on use of force, police stops, and searches.

As noted earlier, violation of our women is also perpetrated by government agencies. In 2015, several Indigenous women in Saskatchewan publicly revealed that they had been forced into having tubal ligation immediately after childbirth.

In 2017, the FSIN was invited to participate in a focus group led by Dr. Yvonne Boyer who is a Canadian lawyer recently named to the Senate of Canada. At that time, Dr. Boyer along with Dr. Judith Bartlett was completing an external review on the forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Saskatchewan and called upon representatives from the Indigenous community
to participate in the data analysis and guide the findings to be included in their report.

It was clear that the women experienced not only racism and discrimination, but also abuse of power, psychological intimidation and physical violence leading to coerced sterilization.

The Saskatchewan First Nation Women's Commission met with one of the victims and her legal counsel, and brought a resolution to the FSIN Chiefs Legislative Assembly in May 2018, which passed unanimously.

The resolution states in part that the Chiefs and Assembly support efforts to work in concert with the survivors and their legal representatives to put a stop to the forced sterilization of indigenous women.

The Women's Commission subsequently brought a similar resolution to the Assembly of First Nations which also passed unanimously by the Chiefs across Canada. A country of Chiefs are behind this.

The forced sterilization of indigenous women by medical professionals breaches the free, prior and informed consent standards contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The forced sterilization of indigenous women falls under the internationally-accepted definition of genocide. It
violates the rights and the sovereignty of women over their own bodies.

The FSIN and the Women's Commission supported the survivors and their legal counsel in bringing this egregious act to the attention of the United Nations Committee Against Torture just last month.

Last week, the Committee made the following recommendations. That all allegations of forced or coerced sterilization are impartially investigated. That the persons responsible are held accountable. That adequate redress is provided to the victims, and that legislative and policy measures are adopted to prevent and criminalize the forced or coerced sterilization of women.

These conclusions confirm that Canada is torturing indigenous women through forced sterilization.

Violence against indigenous women is particularly heinous when it falls within the parameters of institutional violence and violence committed by the state.

Prosecution of offenders. A second pillar in the United Nations CSW57 of the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls is prosecution of offenders.

We have two recommendations in this regard. We call on the Commissioners of the National Inquiry to
support indigenous peoples, the FSIN and the AFN and other
indigenous organizations in calling for changes to the
Criminal Code to make forced sterilization of women a
crime.

The state of Canada and its public
officials must be held accountable. Two years ago I stood
before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and
Constitutional Affairs to express support for Senator
Lillian Dick's Bill S-215, an Act to amend the Criminal
Code for sentencing for violent offences against
Aboriginal women.

In 2016, the Saskatchewan First Nations
Women Commission brought a resolution to the FSIN and the
AFN Chiefs Legislative Assemblies and gained support for
the Bill, which is now before the House of Commons.

If passed by Parliament, the Criminal Code
would be amended and the Courts will be required to
consider the fact that when the victim of an assault,
sexual assault or murder is an Aboriginal female, this
constitutes an aggravating circumstance for the purpose of
sentencing the perpetrator.

We agree with Senator Dick that this change
will send a clear signal that the lives of all women and
girls are valued and precious, whether or not they are
indigenous.
In my presentation to the Standing Senate Committee, I spoke briefly about the relationship between the Criminal Code amendments proposed in Bill S-215 and Gladue factors.

Some might argue that Bill S-215 works against the Supreme Court of Canada's directive in Gladue, but I believe it balances the rights and interests of indigenous women and men by ensuring that all -- that the Courts take both into consideration.

When indigenous women are victims of crime and only Gladue factors are taken into consideration in sentencing, the rights of indigenous women to the full protection of the law are dismissed. Amending the Criminal Code through Bill S-215 and requiring a Court to take Aboriginal female identity into account during sentencing will help to ensure there is no bias against the victim that makes their case less serious in nature compared to any other female.

With the passage of Bill S-215, when Gladue factors are taken into consideration by a Court, the impacts on both the victim and the perpetrator will have to be considered equally.

We cannot expect anything less from this justice system.

Prevention of violence. A third pillar in
the UN CSW57 is prevention of violence.

Much of the prevention and awareness begins with educating both indigenous and non-indigenous people, which requires a long-term commitment from governments at all levels.

In particular, fostering caring communities from young person to young person is most -- is the most sustainable and meaningful work that each individual and community can take to move forward in a supportive, positive environment where violence is no longer a part of values of masculinity.

We need to work on revitalizing our special roles as indigenous women.

Prevention and awareness also begins with acknowledging there is a problem, and showing that indigenous women matter.

We need to focus on community safety. Communities cannot be expected to deal with crises on their own without any added capacity.

Resources need to be adequate and the focus must be on community wellness. All community members should be afforded the opportunities to heal.

Decolonizing our Nations needs to take place by supporting the infusion of cultural teachings and language. The protective -- the protective roles of men
and boys need to be retaught and enhanced.

I reiterate, support for the call to implement all recommendations made to Canada in 2015 under the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Recommendations from the CEDA report that must be addressed include the following areas.

Measures to significantly improve socioeconomic conditions. National strategies dealing with anti-poverty, food security, housing, education and employment. Measures to increase access to mental health services and treatment for addictions. Addressing the excessively high number of indigenous children in the welfare system. Developing a national action plan in concert with indigenous peoples to address all forms of violence against indigenous women.

Ensuring there is sufficient human and financial resources to effectively implement the plan and establishing a mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan.

Provision of service to victims and survivors.

A fourth pillar details -- deals with provision of the -- of services to victims and survivors.

You have heard firsthand from families
across the country and very likely heard what I am about
to present as recommendations from family members.
Nevertheless, I feel I would do an injustice to them if I
don't include their views in my presentation.

Families need practical, long-term and
community-driven support focusing on capacity. Programs
for addictions, which are major causes of violence and
spousal abuse. Additional women's shelters are needed,
both rural and urban. A women's help line should be
established.

Continuous networks of support for families
are needed to ensure ongoing and wrap-around support.
This might include post-traumatic stress support and
victim services specific to First Nations.

Ongoing family support and community-based
opportunities are needed. There should be annual
gatherings that provide peer support, healing through
counselling, and ceremony, and activities for the
families. In their words, “We need to have a family forum
in Saskatchewan. Moms, dads, and siblings should be able
to come together to support each other, and children and
youth should be included.”

Healing and financial support through court
processes. The court -- the court process can
re-traumatize families. Additional counselling support is
needed during this time as well as advocate -- advocates for families. Financial support is needed for families who have to travel to attend court. In their words, “We should have our own Victim Services, customized to our needs.”

Search support. Create a missing persons office for MMIWG to assist and guide families throughout the search for a missing loved one. Funds are needed to bring in search and rescue teams and for accommodation, food and supplies for volunteers who help conduct searches. In their words, “We have to coordinate searches, and we have to be able to pay for the expenses.”

Ceremonial healing. Traditional ceremonies that support the personal growth of Indigenous women is central to moving forward as Nations. These include rites of passage and the role of women as matriarchs. These important teachings can be balanced with Christian teachings -- teachings, depending on the community.

Building communities for the future. Resources should be developed that lead to decolonization and healthy communities. This grass -- this grassroots programming supports cultural education, revitalization of cultural values, land-based sovereignty, language revitalization and strengthen healthy families. Workshops and education focus -- focus on self-awareness, lateral
violence, and self-esteem. In their words, “Our languages are very important. Our languages are our sovereignty. Our kids don’t know their culture, we have to be able to develop cultural programs and work with Elders.”

Better communication between police and families. Families said there is a need for quicker action and response time, and that family member suggestions should be taken seriously. There should be a liaison person to keep families updated throughout the searches and investigations, and to share information with families. In cases of missing persons, updates should be given to families and leadership on progress being made or lack of. Police forces should increase cultural awareness and understand First Nations concerns relating to their investigations of MMIWG. Families also noted that some homicides are wrongly ruled suicides or accidents. This lack of investigation diminishes community confidence in police services. In their words, “Why didn’t the police listen when we were called -- when they were called? We started searching ourselves, found some clues, and only then did they get involved. They didn’t seem to care. We don’t owe -- we don’t know if they searched where we -- where we indicated. The RCMP conducted searches and left with no word to the family. There are
so many in our community who have been murdered, and
nothing has been done. These murders remain unsolved.”

Holding families gently at the center.

Support systems and after-care are important to ensure
families receive the psychological and emotional support
they need. Children who lost their mothers need to access
counselling and healing programs. Family members who are
raising the children of the women who are missing and
murdered need additional support, both financial and
psychological. There should be a foundation for the
children left behind. In their words, “How are we going
to heal the children of missing and murdered Indigenous
women? What supports are there?”

Create a report card system, an action
plan, and an implementation plan. Research has been done
and resources should start flowing to communities for
programs focused on rebuilding families and dealing with
violence. An outcome of the National Inquiry should
include a report card system that is frequently reviewed.
Public updates should be provided at five-year intervals.
An action plan that is First Nations driven is needed. In
their words, “Develop an implementation plan that is
monitored and evaluated. We have to keep focused. We
need something to measure outcomes. Families need to be
reassured this will result in action.”
Resources are required to support the development of programming, both on and off reserve, in all these areas. One recommendation we received, as recently as two weeks ago, is a request from a family member that the National Inquiry hold a family gathering before your Final Report is released to seek input from family members on the recommendations that you will be presenting. We support this request and encourage you to seek additional resources from Canada for such a gathering.

In this part of my presentation, I also bring to your attention the results of research undertaken by the FSIN and the Saskatchewan First Nations Women’s Commission. The full report will be submitted later this week, but today, I present highlights and recommendations.

The Women’s Commission firmly believes that First Nations governments have a critical role to play in alleviating violence against women. To gather the data required for the report, a survey of First Nations government was conducted, followed by more in-depth case studies with First Nations who have assisted members searching for a family member or who is missing or who was murdered. Our staff gathered 50 surveys from 74 First Nations or 68 percent of the -- the First Nations in Saskatchewan. Case studies were conducted with four First
Nations. Seventy-six percent of the First Nations surveyed had families affected by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Ninety percent of the families affected look to their First Nation for support. When contacting their First Nation governments, inquiries were directed to the health and wellness centre, or directly to the elected leaders, including Chief and council. The supports they were seeking mirror what I hear from families, including mental health services and emotional support, support from Elders and for ceremonies, help with search and rescue efforts, immediate financial support, and other supports such as awareness raising, court attendance, funeral arrangements and expenses, and investigative or police liaison support.

When community members go missing, 57 percent of Nations are asked to support search and rescue efforts. Only 16 percent of these reports expert -- only 16 percent of these report expertise in this area, including active fire departments, first responders, a trained emergency response or crisis team, a search and rescue team, or experienced trappers and hunters available in the community. As expected, 88 percent of Nations reported a greater need for capacity in this area. Only 18 percent had a person trained to intake families of
MMIWG. These were largely mental health professionals.

Families require mental health and emotional supports provided by Indigenous staff, with appropriate cultural background and language capabilities. That terminology used in the area of mental health include supports for addictions, ambiguous loss, bullying, grief, intergenerational trauma, lateral violence, residential school trauma, and wellness. Other suggestions -- suggestions included a whole family or community approach that includes respite care support for mental health workers, community leaders, frontline workers, and volunteers. Another segment of families specifically -- a segment of families specifically require cultural support and support from Elders. In the Indigenous understanding of wholistic wellness, preventative, and wrap-around supports were also suggested, including funding for youth camps, parenting programs, family and community retreats, ongoing support groups, healing, gatherings, and women warriors groups.

The tragedy and trauma of MMIWG demands that the nation states, like Canada, address the -- and redress the destructiveness of ongoing colonialism that marginalizes Indigenous women. Through the survey, and case studies, Indigenous nations have clearly and unequivocally demonstrated that Indigenous nationhood
include -- including control over wholistic approaches to justice, medicine, and mental health. In addition to the expertise of the best of western therapies, search and rescue, and justice will build strong peoples. First Nations in Saskatchewan provide the best of their cultural and spiritual practice for families of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls with that limited human and therapeutic support they have, and piece together a community response of awareness and mourning.

Each survey and case study demonstrates this human excellence. What they have also demonstrated is how far reaching the implications of each MMIWG experience is, as family members, volunteers, first responders, frontline workers and leaders find their own mental health depleted while they support their relatives, friends, and citizens.

I conclude my presentation with the following recommendations on behalf of the peoples and nations:

Number 1, recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous nations as nations-to-nation treaty partners. Indigenous sovereignty means that we as Indigenous nations are in control of our own destinies and reaffirm the appropriate roles that support men, women, transgendered, and intersex individuals, and implement the wholistic
understandings of community well-being that ensure the self-actualization of citizens.

Number 2, support the development of wraparound emotional support for the entire community. Providing support for families, MMIWG is not the work of one individual in one department. Other families, Elders, frontline workers in several departments and volunteers are involved in offering supports. All these individuals deserve to be acknowledged that their work is never ending, and fundamentally requires respite for their own mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being alongside family and community services in this area.

This entails transforming workplace cultures to recognize mental health needs, the provision of ceremonies and Elders for those who offer supports to families, and addressing the irregular timeframes need to support families with time for workers to access emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual recuperation.

Number 3, empower departments to be financially flexible and responsive. The jurisdictional shuffle between departments can create stress and uncertainty for families of MMIWG. Nations are forced to take a piecemeal approach to covering as many of the immediate expenses as possible to support their members due to restrictions and funding criteria and often using
their own source revenue. Nations require flexibility to use funds to support MMIWG with impunity throughout the lifelong process of healing, including for long distance travel for community members to support events.

Number 4, facilitate, train, and sustain search and rescue teams privileging local expertise and knowledge. Develop search and rescue teams, implement sustained funding for existing teams, and offer ongoing training opportunities. These teams will recognize and utilize local expertise and knowledge, including local hunters and trappers.

Number 5, ensure capacity exists within health and wellness centres and that Indigenous personnel are available with knowledge of both Indigenous and western therapeutic methods. For appropriate care, many families of MMIWG access mental health supports and health and wellness centres. Their needs are specific as well as long lasting.

Mental health supports must be sustainable far into the future, available to all community members and include Indigenous people trained in both western and non-western methods, as well as people who speak local languages. Capacity is needed to ensure professionals are available with expertise in addictions, ambiguous loss, bullying, grief, intergenerational trauma, lateral
violence, and residential school trauma. Mental health teams include Elders and are empowered to conduct long lasting group work, home visits as necessary. Their irregular work hours are recognized and they are compensated appropriately.

Number 6, promote cultural revitalization for all citizens. Equitable funding is required to acknowledge the elemental role that cultural revitalization plays in community wellness. Children and adults of all ages and genders benefit from multiple opportunities to participate, learn about, and lead cultural and spiritual activities. The fundamental role of culture and the development and sustenance of a nation is nurtured and upheld by all.

Number 7, all nations have their own Canadian judicial system navigator. Every facet in the current judicial system provides opportunities to fail Indigenous individuals and families from first response and missed critical incidences, investigations, with penal institutions and throughout court process. To explain this confusing and foreign justice system, each nation's navigator maintains contact between families of MMIWG and current justice system processes.

Number 8, nations complete their own judicial processes. Nations process Indigenous offenders
and victims through Indigenous system of justice, 
including Indigenous protective services.

Number 9, the Canadian judicial system 
eclipses de-colonization. The Canadian judicial system 
develops a process in partnership with Indigenous peoples 
to respond appropriately to First Nations’ aspirations and 
concerns.

Police forces are representatives of the 
communities of they serve and include personnel fluent in 
Indigenous languages where necessary. Police services 
undergo anti-bias and empathy training. A third party 
oversight committee of Indigenous and non-Indigenous 
people reviews and reports on police and court processes, 
including the conduct of Crown prosecutors where 
Indigenous offenders and victims are involved.

Number 10, respite centres offer short term 
and emergency support. Nations acknowledge ongoing cycles 
of abuse and dysfunction while families to continue to 
grapple with the long term affects of colonialism. To 
offer respite from situations nations offer nearby safe 
sites for overnight stays where citizens access 
educational information, cultural, emotional, physical, 
and optional spiritual supports.

Researchers, communities, leaders, and 
frontline workers agree that the violent experiences of
Indigenous women on and off reserve will be best prevented and redressed through a greater control over and access to Indigenous approaches to Indigenous justice and health, including the wraparound support of a rich and vibrant culture.

In addition to the need to protect and preserve the lives of Indigenous women and girls, federal and provincial governments must respect and support Indigenous governance in ways that will prevent tragedy and uplift those that remain behind. No one understands this better than Indigenous people. Our fundamental belief is that maintaining control over land, policy, health and law, including culture, language, and ceremony, will result in a decrease in vulnerability to violence for Indigenous women and girls.

In closing, I want to leave you with a statement that I heard that I never forgot. And a lady who had lost her daughter, Commissioners, she spoke and she said, "I am one of the lucky ones; I got to bury my daughter."

Commissioners, thank you for allowing us to share today. Chi-meegwetch, nashiwan (ph).

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Vice Chief Bear.
Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you have any questions for the party?

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you, Vice Chief Bear. It's wonderful to see you again. I want to thank you for your submissions. Thank you for the work of -- the work and involvement with the Human Rights Watch, and that information has been very helpful for us. So thank you very much. And thank you for your submissions today.

**COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** And, Vice-Chief Bear, I just want to say thank you as well for your submissions and for all of your recommendations and providing us with a list of recommendations, and I look forward to any further written materials as well. Miigwech.

**COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Vice-Chief, I just have one question, and that has to do with your 10th recommendation about the respite centres, and I’m not sure I understand the concept. Is this a transition house, or a shelter type of centre, or is it more of an education centre?

**VICE-CHIEF HEATHER BEAR:** Well, we’re looking at, you know, in terms of respite, you know, we know that many families have suffered for decades, whatever respite is needed. Even with the cycle of trauma
it can come up at any time, so emergency, as long as
there’s respite there no matter how long the lost is lost.

COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay. Thank
you. Now I have a better understanding. Thank you.
I too want to thank you for your very
thoughtful and helpful submissions, and I too look forward
to reading your final submissions. They’ll be I’m sure
very helpful. Thank you, Vice-Chief.

VICE-CHIEF HEATHER BEAR: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.
The next party I’d like to invite to the
podium to make submissions is Ms. Erica Beaudin. And Ms.
Beaudin will be making submissions on behalf of the Regina
Treaty Status Indian Services Incorporated.

---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: I’ve gotten to the
point where they let me adjust my own microphone now.
Good afternoon, Commissioners. I greet you
this afternoon with only good thoughts and well wishes as
you embark on the final leg of Parts II and III of the
National Inquiry’s mandate to deliver recommendations to
prevent and intervene on the issue of violence in the
lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA
individuals.
I bring all of my thanks to the Elders, knowledge keepers, drummers, singers, the caretakers of the Qulliq, and all of the other sacred items that have guided and assisted us on this journey that we have embarked on together.

I acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded traditional lands of the Algonquin and the homelands of the Métis people. Further, I acknowledge that a large number of the Inuit now call these lands home.

We can only do the work we do together when we are prayed for and supported by our ceremonial people. Thank you to the Elders for their ceremonies this week. You are the conduit to the spirits who keep us safe so we may do what we individually and collectively have to.

Not one of us would be here without the families who lost their loved ones through this heinous violence. Each one of us who have committed to this National Inquiry feels the responsibility of our participation heavily on our shoulders. Families, I hope our collective effort is able to assure you that your loved one is remembered, honoured, and so worthy of the recognition of their dignity as Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA.

I am also extending my appreciation and
thanks to the other parties with standing who have all participated with passion, commitment, and with the purpose of eradicating violence in the lives of our Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQIA individuals.

As well, I state that our party concurs with the recommendations that have been brought forward thus far and supports the adoption and implementation of the proposed recommendations.

For the record, my name is Erica Beaudin, and for the purposes of this National Inquiry, I am the non-legal advocate for the Regina Treaty Status Indian Services Incorporated, of which I’m also the Executive Director.

With me today is Marie-Anne Daywalker-Pelletier, who is the long-serving Chief of the Okanese First Nation -- if Chief Daywalker could stand please -- which is a Cree Tribe within southern Saskatchewan. She is also a Board member of RTSIS, which is the acronym that I’ll be using during this presentation as well as in our closing submission.

Chief Daywalker-Pelletier has been instrumental in supporting and advocating for Indigenous women’s voices as well as the elimination of violence in our homes, communities, and nations. I am very thankful for her physical support as I present to you today.
It is a bit intimidating for me to follow such a strong advocate and supporter for women and children’s rights like Vice-Chief Bear. Vice-Chief Bear is at heart and first and foremost a community woman who walks with all who asks for her help. In Saskatchewan we are very fortunate to have her as an advocate at the highest level of our Indigenous structures.

I could not conduct this work in a genuine manner without the guidance of the families as well as the professionals and professionals who support the families.

I give special mention to Maxine Goforth, mother of late Kelly Goforth-Wolfe, Delores Stevenson, and to the late Nadine Machiskinic, and Summer Sugar Favel, sister to Tamra Keepness. As well, I acknowledge Dr. Kim McKay-McNabb who has provided group and individual therapies for the families.

These women have supported the writing of the final submissions of RTSIS to the National Inquiry. Their knowledge is invaluable, and any movement we do collectively or individually must include the direction and guidance of the families and their lived experiences.

It is my honour to present to the National Inquiry Commissioners this week on our recommendations and best practices that we feel will have the best chance at the eradication of violence in the lives of our women,
children, and 2SLGBTQIA.

Before I get into the heart of our presentation, I feel compelled to comment on the role of the federal government in setting up this National Inquiry to not succeed in the manner that was justifiably expected by the families, Indigenous governments, and the service providers who are in the trenches dealing with this horrific violence.

From the very moment the government announced this inquiry and hastily put together the structure as well as the Commissioners they stated to all of us who were affected by this issue, most importantly the families, that a national inquiry would be families first. This was a lie.

A national inquiry is a legal process first and foremost and the structure must conform to the Act of which it is based or it is considered to be faulty and contestable in the Canadian court of law.

Next, the Commissioners were expected to create an entire high security secretariat with little to no infrastructure or support in the shortest amount of time that any national inquiry has been given in Canadian history.

Then the Commissioners had the unenviable task of creating an Indigenous process within a system
that saw families as objects rather than the subjects of
the outcomes expected.

The federal government then gave timelines
and financial restraints that even at a glance a person
could identify that there would be areas that would not be
included or there would not be enough time to properly
address root causes.

No wonder why family members have been
upset.

However, it has been fairly easy to point
to the people who have to work within this legal structure
as the villains in keeping families out of this process.
This, my friends, is the very definition of colonial
violence.

The federal government set up unrealistic
expectations and then allowed its Commissioners and staff
to take the brunt of the anger in a legal process they had
little to no control over. In fact, the Commissioners in
their terms of reference are expected to follow the
Inquiries Act as a chief duty of them taking this post.

This is not to say that there hasn’t been
operational issues that may have been dealt with in a more
functional manner. However, even in this area, with the
microscopic lens that the National Inquiry has been under,
armchair quarterbacks have been able to criticize and
voice how the National Inquiry is derailing and/or failing and all with the assistance of mainstream media who perpetuated this colonial violence.

This is what all of us who have participated in this National Inquiry have been subjected to. It has been our individual choice in how we understand, process, and address it through our active or passive participation.

Part of decolonization is to solemnly and purposely deconstruct what is presented as truth to ensure those who are truly responsible for the state of affairs are held accountable rather than becoming gatekeepers and scapegoating to ensure the colonizer continues the insidious violence that has become so normalized in our lives.

It is my hope the Commissioners address the issue of this colonial violence perpetrated by the federal government in their final report.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Since this Inquiry began, we have heard many truths, as well as solutions, from the family members, survivors, witnesses, and parties with standing. This has been a journey that has evolved and a common thread has been resiliency and dedication to not only survive but to thrive, as we heard from Jeffrey
McNeil-Seymour in Iqaluit.

We heard how our women have battled against the systems that were designed to silence, maim, and kill us in spirit, mind, and body. The fact that a National Inquiry had to occur demonstrates that success. The fact that we are all participating in this National Inquiry to battle back demonstrates their failure.

Indigenous women have been using whatever power we have to create change in the area of MMIWG2S. Oftentimes, even this effort has been silenced by the state. As well, there has been no acknowledgement from the state or government responses that have been enacted due to Indigenous women who have gone missing and/or murdered.

This definitely occurred in Saskatchewan. Between 2004 and '05, one Indigenous girl child went missing and three Indigenous women went missing and was later found murdered. This created a crisis in our communities. This created a state of crisis and emergency for our Indigenous leadership.

I present to you Chief Day Walker-Pelletier, who absolutely did not want to be acknowledged for this, but I feel, for the record, it must be acknowledged that it took three of our women to go missing and then murdered, a girl child to go missing, and one of
our long-standing women chiefs to advocate with the
premier himself -- and I was at that meeting so I can
attest to it as a witness -- that he, on behalf of the
government, had to do something in order to stop this
violence.

At that time, then-Premier Calvert had
definitely -- had told Chief Day Walker that there would
something that would definitely be done. Thus, we had the
formation of the Provincial Partnership Committee on
Missing Persons. This was a provincial initiative to look
at why people went missing in the Province of
Saskatchewan.

Chief Day Walker-Pelletier, along with
other women chiefs, advocated that it be specific to
Indigenous women and girls; however, at that time, the
province had said, "No, we will look and find -- look at
reasons why all people go missing in the Province of
Saskatchewan."

Ten (10) years later -- and may I say that
in 2008, funding was given to support systems with very
little to go to community capacity, so many of us worked
on that committee in order to have better responses to
when a person goes missing. And while it was needed that
systems were in fact created or positions were created in
order to better respond, the bulk of the money went to the
systems in order to support their systems, and very little, if not any, went to the community groups and the First Nations that supported the people who went missing and/or murdered.

Ten(10) years later when those of us who advocated on the 10th anniversary that in fact, we should acknowledge that it took our Indigenous women to go missing and then murdered and a girl child to missing that that needed to be acknowledged by the Province of Saskatchewan and that it took our women's leadership in order to have that acknowledged.

We were told no, that in fact, that it could not be acknowledged because that was a previous government. So therefore, the ego of the government surpassed the importance of acknowledging the role that our Indigenous women, the loss of their lives, had in creating change, positive change in the Province of Saskatchewan. That, Commissioners, is an example of more colonial violence.

The Regina Treaty Status Indian Services Inc. is submitting 34 recommendations; however, I will only be touching on four today regarding service delivery and three regarding the conclusion of the National Inquiry.
Inquiry Commissioners recommend the federal government support and build capacity in First Nations communities in the creation of sustainability of search and rescue teams. Presently, there are very few First Nation search and rescue teams and they must be certified by the provincial SARSAV umbrella. If there was a provincial and federal Indigenous SARSAV organization, policies and procedures could be created to meet the needs of the First Nations communities.

The way that SARSAV is triggered in the Province of Saskatchewan -- and I'm sure it's that way in other provinces -- is the police must call the search and rescue team and they are only there for a specific purpose and to search a certain area. Once that has been completed, their task is completed and they leave the community.

So what happens to us? Our families still conduct the search, the leadership still conducts the searches on their own with very little to no money at all. We have the ceremonies; we have the people from neighbouring communities come in to support these searches, and sometimes searches last from anywhere from one to two days to three months.

And I know this because I was on one of those searches for three months. It was very difficult
for the leadership of the community and to be able to feed
up to 100 searchers at a time. And they, in fact, had the
grandmothers go to their freezers to grab the wild meat,
the country food as it's called in Inuit territory, in
order to feed the searchers.

Believe me, we had a lot of moose, deer,
elk, as well as boiled eggs.

We need to have the ability to have First
Nations leadership trigger searches and to determine how
long they are to last as directed by the families, and
there needs to be access to funding for these search
efforts.

Survivors or victims fund. That the
National Inquiry Commissioners recommend the creation of a
survivors' or victims' fund for children of MMIW2S. The
ability for family members to apply on behalf of children
or of the children for their care, apart from the Social
Services system, would allow for care files to close or to
never be created. Family would then be able to raise the
children left behind without involvement of Social
Services. This would also create a dignified way for
children to be raised as opposed to being wards of the
state. Further, survivor children should be eligible for
state-sponsored post-secondary education.

Third, forever care, that the National
Inquiry Commissioner recommend the development of a concept model of forever care, not after care. Survivors of violence, namely the families, will have to access trauma-informed programs to assist in dealing with their lifelong grief. Currently, just in our organization alone, we are now walking with up to three generations of family members or survivors. Support needs to be available through lifetimes.

Support existing services, that the National Inquiry Commissioners recommend that existing services that are being provided to families of MMIWG2S, whether they be at the band, tribal council, or off-reserve urban services, are recognized as doing the work for the families and further capacity is built within these structures, and further, that additional positions be created and funded to provided cohesive and coordinated case-managed services that are to the benefit of the family member. This is to be based on a best practices model that encompasses the entire well being of the individual and family.

The Regina Treaty Status Indian Services is located in the heart of Treaty 4 territory and is owned by the TFHQ Inc. whose shareholders are the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council and the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council.
We have representation from all but two of the First Nations of southern Saskatchewan on our board of directors. As the urban service delivery arm of the corporation, we are mandated to assist with the transition between on-and-off reserve as well as to provide services to anyone who resides or is visiting the City of Regina.

We are very fortunate to be owned by a corporation that also owns the All Nations Healing Hospital; Silver Sage Housing Corporation; the W.I.S.H. and Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter, which are domestic violence shelters; and the Leading Thunderbird Lodge, which is a youth treatment facility for young men.

Further, we have partnerships with tribal council companies such as FHQ Dove, which prioritizes employment and training.

Our leadership and tribal councils entities have worked diligently to build capacity so that Indigenous people can be independent of the systems that have created generations of dependency. We feel that we have put together a best practices model that could benefit other areas. We call it "Walking with Families to the Road to Independence".

We are able to offer, especially -- and I'm going to speak specifically about families of MMIW2SQLGBTQIA -- that immediately, that they have access
to traditional and cultural ceremonies and supports. We have the ability to have western therapy delivered by Indigenous professionals. We also have therapy in a safe place for children of women left behind.

One of the biggest issues that seems to happen when we have the families is that they have now been in a state of crisis, which was basically froze -- have them frozen sometimes for a month, sometimes for up to 10 years. And it all depends on the services that are available in order for them to walk through their grief and to move to that path of moving beyond that immediately grief.

Housing is a huge area, safe housing, for the children left behind as well as the family members. Addiction services is another area that they need the support, whether they are in recovery or they require recovery.

Training and employment. Poverty is a huge issue for our families because many have lost their jobs as they go through this grief. And so they feel that they cannot go back to past jobs or they would -- they're now in the position of having to support more people within their family due to raising grandchildren.

So training and employment is extremely important to these families.
The partnerships with the employment is also equally important because when the families are able to access that employment, it is very difficult for them to walk through that employment with -- as a regular employee where they don't have the ability to get up at 8:30 in the morning and work till 4:30 at night most times because there are times when they're so filled with anxiety or grief they can't leave their house or else they have to go home early.

So they need to have employment services that are supported by agencies where they are able to have a trauma-informed care to move to the place where they are able to have the employment as expected by greater society.

Those are our best practices. We feel that we have had incredible success in walking with families. We have, in fact, been told by families that if it wasn't for all of those aspects that are moving in together and in unison that they would have fallen off in some ways and it would have been hard for them to jump back on.

Final conclusions. That the National Inquiry Commissioners ensure processes for the federal and other governments implement the MMIWG2S recommendations. There must be benchmarks and outcomes that are identified that the governments must abide by in terms
of receiving recommendations from the MMIWG2S Inquiry.

An oversight committee should give a report card on how the governments are doing with the implementation annually for no less than five years.

That the National Inquiry Commissioners supports a national gathering for families of MMIWG2S for families to come together to receive support.

From this gathering, a network for families must be fully funded and support so that they may be the caretakers of their -- where they want to go within their network.

That the National Inquiry Commissioners support a two-day healing gathering, perhaps in conjunction with closing ceremonies in Whitehorse for parties with standing and staff to debrief and share about their experiences in the past two years regarding the vicarious trauma that we have all experienced.

This is a cultural teaching as well, for those who started this journey must complete this journey.

Such -- situations such as contribution agreements may be extended to occur, and there are always administrative ways to make this happen.

In conclusion, it has been my honour to be a part of this process. It has changed my life.

There are times that I felt like I couldn't
go on, and there are personal sacrifices such as an internal commitment to participate in one of our big lodges for the first time.

When I spoke with one of our spiritual people, he explained to me this process was my big lodge. I sacrificed and persevered and fell down and didn't think I could get up, and only by the grace of Creator and ceremony was I able to stand and continue.

While this has been difficult, I have emerged a stronger advocate and am more committed to eradicating this violence that our most vulnerable have experienced.

I know my experience is not unique, and I raise my hands to all of us who have gone through this spiritual transformation.

Thank you for listening, and I give all credit for any contribution my organization or myself may have made to Creator for standing with me and our organization as we did this work.

Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Ms. Beaudin.

Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you have any questions for the party?
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I don't know if any of us can even speak.

As I said earlier today, we're not often left speechless, as you know. I'm going to speak on behalf of all of us, not just the Commissioners, but the grandmothers, the Elders, our staff as well to thank you very much for your participation over the kilometres, over the months, over here and now.

Your input, your contribution to the work that we're doing has been invaluable. So I want to thank you.

I hope you savoured that applause, and I know as we're able to put these transcripts and videos on our web site, I hope you play back that applause regularly as a reminder of your hard work and your commitment because you earned every split second of that applause.

So thank you. We look forward to reading your written submissions. We'll read them, I'm sure, several times over.

And rest assured that you've made a big difference to our work in a good way. Thank you so much.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Chief Commissioner, we are scheduled now to have a break, and we are again ahead of time. So what I would like to request is that we take a 20-minute now and, prior to the conclusion of that
20 minutes, I will update on the availability of the next party, if that's all right, on their -- to go a little bit earlier than scheduled.

Chief Commissioner Marion Buller: You know I like early.

Sure. Let's take a 20-minute break and we'll have an update at the end of that time. Thank you.

--- Upon recessing at 2:55 p.m./L'audience est suspendue à 14h55

--- Upon resuming at 3:20 p.m./L'audience est reprise à 15h20

M.S. Meredith Porter: Thank you.

Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, the next party that I would like to invite up to the podium for their final submissions is from the Sioux Lookout Collective. The representative for the Sioux Lookout Collective is Ms. Darlene Angeconeb.

---Submissions by/Sousmissions par Ms. Darlene Angeconeb

Ms. Darlene Angeconeb: Bonjour. Darlene Angeconeb. (Speaking in Native language) My name is Darlene Angeconeb, Caribou Clan, and I come from Lac Seul First Nation, and I live in the town of Sioux Lookout, Ontario.

We sent in a PowerPoint. I don't know if it's going to show. Is it? Okay.
I would like to acknowledge the territory of the Algonquin people of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation. I would also like to acknowledge the Elders, the Commissioners, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

I will be delivering the presentation on behalf of the Sioux Lookout Collective. Sioux Lookout is a small town located in Northwestern Ontario, five hours north of Thunder Bay. Our Collective consists of Mayor Doug Lawrence from the Municipality of Sioux Lookout; Jennifer Thomas, Executive Director of Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre; Tana Troniak, Executive Director of the First Step Women's Shelter.

We originally applied for standing within the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls under the Sioux Lookout Truth and Reconciliation Committee, which in the process became the Sioux Lookout Collective.

Our presentation is a little bit different, and it tells the story of the area and it shows the many changes that occurred in the Town of Sioux Lookout. The presentation will also show you how the recent approaches can help achieve, make, and change for the better recent approaches that have a focus on reconciliation and well hopefully provide a hopeful message to the Inquiry.
This presentation will review the geographical and historical setting, healthcare, partnerships and collaboration, economic development, justice and policing, education, and the youth. We also refer to some of the cases of the missing and murdered in our area.

Slide 2. Okay. This is the map of the Sioux Lookout area and the remote First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. So you can see there about 30-something First Nations, and there are many towns nearby, Dryden, Red Lake, Kenora, Pickle Lake, and Ignace, just to name a few. The land mass covers half of Ontario, so it's a large geographical area.

Sioux Lookout is a town with a population of approximately 6,000 people. About half are Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Sioux Lookout is located at the hub of these First Nation communities and provides services for 30,000 people from 30 First Nations. Twenty-five (25) of these communities are remote with fly-in access and are only accessible in the wintertime by winter road systems.

The winter roads enable First Nations to transport building materials and other things to their communities. It's cheaper for them in the wintertime. Food is transported by air most of the time and creates a high cost of living for families. There is poverty within
the First Nations due to the high cost of living, the lack of employment, and the housing situation.

In the early 1900s, Indian residential schools were built in Sioux Lookout, Kenora, Fort Frances, McIntosh, Poplar Hill, and Stirland Lake. This is Slide 3. The legacy of Indian residential schools affects life in the First Nation communities in our area.

The two boys on the bottom part of that slide are Charles Ombash, who was 11; and Tom Ombash, who was 12. They went missing from Pelican Lake Indian Residential School on October 5th, 1956. The family is still affected by this. And you can see from the date they went missing, October 5th, 1956, the principal of the school reported the boys missing on November 10th, so that's over a month. So that's just to provide you with a little bit of information, because we felt that the residential schools are a very important part of why things are happening the way they are today.

Okay. So Slide 4 now. Over time for Sioux Lookout, there have been many changes. Sioux Lookout is located along the CN line and employed many at the railway and in the timber industry. There was also a military radar base because of the DEW Line mentality that was going on in the fifties and sixties, so they felt that they needed a military radar base there. And -- so that
was located between the town and Pelican Lake Indian Residential School.

In the 1970s, more First Nations people are beginning to move into Sioux Lookout for the jobs and for the services. This is the beginning of the Friendship Centre in Sioux Lookout. The purpose of the Friendship Centre was to provide programs and to advocate for clients for housing, education, training, employment, and then I guess later on medical.

Sioux Lookout in the seventies was a place where racist remarks and attitudes were prevalent towards First Nations people. So the racism was very prevalent.

Slide 5. One of the Indigenous women from Whitesand near Armstrong, Ontario, who was living in Sioux Lookout was 19-year old Audrey Anderson. The case of Audrey Anderson was re-opened by the family and police just a little while ago. On October 23rd, there was a press conference and families and supporters turned out for that press conference outside. There was a little bit of snow falling. The status of the case was changed from accidental to undetermined and is being investigated.

Slide 6. So there is Audrey. The lack of Audrey's case can, unfortunately, be traced to systemic racism within the justice system. We hope that other similar cases can be re-opened to bring justice and
closure to the families of missing, murdered Indigenous women and girls. And there you see the press conference outside.

Slide 7. So there continued to be more change with more organizations that were popping up in Sioux Lookout, especially with the tribal councils. There were more programs and services. The Friendship Centre continued to grow and many of the organizations and many First Nations combined their funding and their services to support the people that were starting to live in Sioux Lookout now.

Slide 8. In 1985, many thought that the town was dying because the military base was no longer there, the forest industry was declining, as well as CNR, but in reality, the First Nation businesses and organizations were starting to develop and contribute to the economy within the town, which also included the airport and the services. So there was a shift towards more programs and services for the North that was happening in Sioux Lookout. And this is why we call Sioux Lookout the hub because it is still a hub for air travel for many of the northern communities.

And there are a number of organizations that deal with education, training, because the residential school is not Pelican Lake Indian Residential
School anymore, it's Pelican Falls First Nations High School, and they service -- they educate maybe about 150 youth in that high school. So the location is still the same where that school was before, and now it's a high school for First Nations students from the North. As well as a lot of health services that are happening in Sioux Lookout, and I'll explain about that later with the hospital.

Slide 9. There continued to be many missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Northwestern Ontario. These are only a few.

Viola Panacheese, Age 42, went missing in Sioux Lookout on August 19, 1991. She was in the process of getting her family together. She was never found. The family of the late Viola Panacheese experienced further suffering when it became evident that the records and pictures were lost as a result of the physical move by the OPP police station to their current location. So they moved to a different building.

So the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls need to be assured that information evidenced and investigations need to be stored properly and handled safely with care and respect. The file, I believe, is being rebuilt and it may be in Orillia. I'm not sure what's happening there, but --
okay. The middle one is Cecilia Payash, age 47, and her son, Leo, went missing in Red Lake in July 1st, 1957. The bottom lady there, Sarah Skunk, age 43, of Mishkeegogamang First Nation went missing in January 1995. These are a few cases near Sioux Lookout, and I know there are a lot more. Okay, so we feel for the families, and we realize there are some unfortunate circumstances such as this loss of files, and the -- the investigations. That can -- that can only be attributed to systemic racism within the justice system. We call for this to change.

Slide 10. The changes for Sioux Lookout’s health care system speaks to a partnership and collaboration of First Nations, the town, and the two levels of government. From the health care system, there was a growth in the types of services being offered to Indigenous, non-Indigenous. There were also economic spin-offs for the town.

Slide 11. So with the Four Party Agreement, the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre was established, in 2010 it was built. And it -- there was also a hostel called the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority Hostel. The whole thing was designed by Indigenous architect, Douglas Cardinal. And the hospital promotes Indigenous culture. You can go to the next slide. And is the only hospital in Canada that serves
Indigenous food for their hospital and for the hostel
clients. We know they also have cultural competency,
cultural sensitivity training for their staff. So -- so
health is
a -- is a large employer.

Slide 13. So what do we do? In Sioux
Lookout, you can see then health and social service is a
very large part of what the town does, and what the
people -- where the people work. And then there’s public
administration, accommodation, and food services.
Sometimes there are not enough hotel rooms for people
coming from the north. They have to be driven to Dryden,
and I hear even as far as Kenora, to -- to get
accommodation for the night, and then they have to drive
into Sioux Lookout for their appointment the next day. So
we need more hotels, we need -- we have a lot of -- a lot
of growth that’s happening. And -- okay, so there’s a lot
of travel that people are doing for -- for health. And to
meet the demand, there needs to be more -- there is a lot
of partnership, collaboration happening amongst the
agencies and the municipality, so everyone is working
together.

Slide 14. The -- this included the
development of the Anti-Racism Committee in the 1990s.
Garnet, my cousin, is a key person in starting the racism
committee, and he felt like it was needed. And so he’s still, kind of, working a little bit here and there. But we need to develop understanding and promote cultural sensitivity, education, and competency within the health care, the social, and the justice systems.

Slide 15. So the Friendship Accord is something that the municipality has done. At first, they had four, I think -- I believe they have five First Nations that signed onto this Friendship Accord. Now, the goal of the Friendship Accord is recognition and respect of government culture and the people. It is so the leaders in the area -- in the communities work together and to establish open lines of communication and to encourage First Nation investment in the municipality.

Slide 16. So the Chiefs and mayors gathering in the municipality, but also in the First Nations. The municipality is represented by Mayor Doug Lawrance, and he participates in many First Nation conferences, meetings, summits. And it’s all to promote partnerships working together and reconciliation.

Slide 17. Next one. So the Mayor’s Committee for Truth and Reconciliation was enacted in August 2016, and 2017 was proclaimed The Year of Reconciliation in Sioux Lookout. The committee is active and works towards reconciliation. The Truth and
Reconciliation Committee is developing areas of reconciliation by splitting the 94 calls to action into four areas of historical, social, political, and business. And then there are subcommittees formed within those four areas. So that’s our approach to the TRC recommendations.

Next slide. And these are some of the activities that the committee has done. Public education, engagement events, representation at local, provincial, and national events. Ongoing work towards reconciliation — truth and reconciliation. Work by the local museum and library. There’s also a Wawatay monthly municipal radio show, and recently a standing with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Slide 19. Now, we need to tell you about Equay-wuk Women’s Group. And this is the group that I’ve been working with for the last 20 years. Where next year, we will be in our 30th year of operation as a incorporated charitable organization. We are an independent women’s group, so we don’t belong to any provincial group. We don’t belong to the national women’s groups. We’re just, kind of, on our own. We service 31 First Nations communities. And we have different programs, such as — such as the one I work for, which is Building Aboriginal Women’s Leadership. It’s funded by the Government of Ontario. I also do the acting director role because we
don’t have any core funding, so we don’t -- we can’t pay
for a director. So anyway, some of the topics that we
have are family violence, parenting, the leadership, the
youth, the Elder’s projects, the addictions. We have an
employment skills training program, which runs two or
three times a year. And we also have the families of
missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

So we house one of the four FILU location --
-- locations in Ontario. We are one of the FILU locations.
We also have a victim services counselling program. Both
programs service the families of the missing and murdered
Indigenous women, girls, transgendered, and two-spirited.
Both programs are funded by the Government of Ontario, so
we have a website there, and it’s www.equaywuk.ca. So I
would just like to say that the FILU program that works
with the family of the late Audrey Anderson, they worked
with that family to get that case reopened.

Therefore, this should prove to be a
recommendation for the federal and provincial governments
to provide further funding to support and to continue to
work with the families of missing and murdered Indigenous
womens and girls. We also need the government to provide
funding for Indigenous women’s groups, especially those
who are working with the families of missing and murdered
Indigenous women and girls. And I’m sure you’ve heard a
lot of the other recommendations that fall along those lines.

Okay. Slide 20. This slide shows the growing economic development opportunities in Sioux Lookout because of all the growth I was telling you about. Okay. Next slide. Oops. For justice and policing. Here’s the current -- the review of the current situation. We have a number of OPP. There are about 55 officers who serve in Sioux Lookout, and five -- and five of the surrounding First Nation communities. The other First Nations in the area either have their own police service or they are being served by the Nishnawbe Aski Police Services, or NAPS as they’re called. The cost per household is six times the norm for Ontario, and it’s higher -- it’s a higher rate than many other cities and towns in Ontario. Many of the issues that the police deal with are alcohol related, so you see that with the second bottom, it says, “Liquor Licence Act Charges” and causing the disturbance would be a result of that. And we heard the -- yeah, so anyway.

The other thing that we are concerned about are the homeless people on the streets. There are about 66 persons who are on the streets of Sioux Lookout. The number could be higher, I was told, okay.

So, anyway, the young women in the
street suffer sexual assaults, physical assaults, human trafficking. Many of whom are escaping homelessness and poverty, overcrowded housing in their own communities, so sometimes they come to Sioux Lookout and they end up staying there.

They are vulnerable to all the dangers in the streets, and there are some who have mental health issues and some who are avoiding the sexual abuse and the assaults that they experience in their communities.

This can be traced to what has been termed the legacy of Indian residential schools, and it shows that there has never been a time for a more urgent need for healing initiatives and reconciliation. There needs to be work done to recognize the Indian residential school situation today.

Slide 22.

So education and youth is another area of growth in Sioux Lookout. There are many youth who take advantage of the training programs and educational opportunities that are available in Sioux Lookout through any of these places that are listed on that slide.

Next.

A new high school has been built. So outside of school time there are programs for youth in the community.
Slide 24.

Many of the youth programs are supported by municipalities, tribal councils, schoolboard, and health organizations. The second listed program called WINKS is actually a multi-tribal council initiative, and they’ve been doing all kind of activities with the youths right after school, on the weekends. You know, they’re skinning moose hides, they’re going hunting, they’re doing all these traditional land activities and it’s really great.

We also have a poverty reduction strategy, and we’re looking at more addictions and treatment centres. Okay.

So Sioux Lookout is truly the hub for all these services. Okay.

And of course, the airport, like I said, needed to be expanded, and that is currently being worked on. It’s almost done.

Next.

So Slide 27. Okay.

The situation table has been in place for the last two years and it’s made up of many social services and agencies. Community safety for all is an important aspect of living in Sioux Lookout. Some of the remedies for the challenges we face as a small town
include alternative justice and pursuit of a community justice centre.

There are too many Indigenous persons represented in jails and prisons. Healing is pursued as a better solution to incarceration.

The Town of Sioux Lookout has implemented a three-person Police Services Board since early 2017. It consists of Mayor Doug Lawrance and the other two are First Nations women. I am the Chair, I’m also -- yeah, I’m the Chair of this Police Services Board.

So this is an example of one of the changes that needs to take place within our municipalities. We need to involve more First Nations within those governing bodies.

The other changes with regard to justice and policing involve further advocacy for the Ontario Provincial Police with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and that’s being done right now.

Also, the KDSB, or the Kenora District Services Board is working toward housing initiatives, and they have supportive housing which provides housing for 20 people. And they’re also looking to have bail beds, a detox, an emergency shelter, and advocating for drug and alcohol treatment centre.

So this is the way we’re going. We’re
looking at healing and looking at all these things that are, of course, the result of all the things that have happened; the fallout from the IRS, from the Indian residential schools.

So the -- okay. The youth centre; we’ve covered that.

And the Diverse Voices for Change is to get more women involved in governance, whether it’s a municipality, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, there’s also FCM Can-Do Distribution Centre which is distributing food to the north, fresh fruits, vegetables, and less costly groceries.

So these are just some of the ways that the municipality tries to help and advocate for certain things that are needed in the north.

Slide 29. Okay.

Yes, we, like other Canadian towns and cities, have challenges that are attributed to the legacy of the Indian residential schools. We need to change this. We need to examine ways to reduce homelessness, addictions, and poverty. We need to continue to develop relevant programs for women, youth, and families.

So far the Municipality of Sioux Lookout has created many partnerships with First Nations, as well as local businesses, organizations. Not only does
Sioux Lookout advocate for local programs and services, it provides support to First Nations’ interests through the many partnerships it maintains.

The Municipality realizes the Indian residential school has created many challenges and Mayor Doug Lawrance put the Mayor’s Committee for Truth and Reconciliation into place.

The goal of the Mayor’s Committee is to begin work on the 94 calls to action as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation. This is why the town is now continually advocating for healing programs and services.

Sioux Lookout is promoting reconciliation, and we hope that other towns and municipalities will do the same.

Slide 30.

So we remember Audrey Anderson and Viola Panacheese and the other many missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in our area, and we think of their families who have suffered for many years. We hope that sharing our story of change and about the work towards reconciliation will further help the work of the National Inquiry for Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

So I thank you, the Commissioners, the families, and the Elders for listening to me. And the
Sioux Lookout Collective; it is an honour to be here at the National Inquiry for Missing, Murdered Women and girls.

Bless you for the work that you are doing.

Chi-miigwech.  

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you, Ms. Angeconeb.

I wanted to ask at this time if the 31-page PowerPoint presentation that you’ve shared today, if you’d like to make that an exhibit?

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Say what? Say that again.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: If you wanted to add the PowerPoint presentation that you went through today, if you wanted to add it as an exhibit.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah, sure.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Okay, thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:

Exhibit 9 is the PowerPoint.

--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE No. 9:

PowerPoint presentation 'Sioux Lookout Collective presentation to the National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,
December 2018 (31 pages)
Submitted by: Darlene Angeconeb,
Representative for Sioux Lookout
Collective

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:

Thank you.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: So I think,
you know, because of the way things are and have been in
Sioux Lookout, I’m thinking that other areas, other
provinces might be similar. So I don’t know if anybody’s
been telling you that kind of story or taking that kind of
approach with -- especially the work that needs to be done
in reconciliation.

Questions? No?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I don’t
have any questions. I can confirm that, yes, we’ve heard
about the challenges of isolation.

Being a hub city -- we were in the
community of Iqaluit, City of Iqaluit that is the hub city
for Nunavut, and the challenges that they faced and the
work that needed to be done.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: So thank
you very much for sharing what you’re doing and your knowledge and wisdom.

    Thank you. Miigwech.

    **MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** Yeah, thank you.

    **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yes, thanks, Ms. Angeconeb, for coming here and telling us about some of the things that are happening in Sioux Lookout and the region in northwestern Ontario. Chi-miigwech.

    **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:**

    Thank you.

    I just have a couple of questions.

    It’s quite an honour to have a Chair of a police board here.

    What do you see as the priorities for policing in your area?

    **MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** Well, first of all, I mean, when you’re talking about the systemic racism that is happening, definitely education of the police, whether it’s cultural sensitivity training or something like that, that needs to start there. And, yes, there needs to be more, I think, Aboriginal representation, especially if you have a high population of Aboriginal people within the cities or those towns. That there needs
to be representation and there needs to be Aboriginal ....

*laiason people, you know, working within those police
forces. Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank
you. And for the high school, I notice that there's also
a college attached to it, or is that a separate entity?

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: I'm not sure.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Oh,
okay. It's just, the slide ---

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Did it say
"college" on that slide somewhere?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Right,
yes.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah. It's
probably -- I know there's a couple of college -- there
may be a couple of college programs.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yeah,
Confederation College?

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah, yeah. They
do have some programs there. They're only like, first
year or half a year of something or certificate programs.
That's just the very beginnings of some availability of
college program for people.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yeah.
Excellent.
And then for the high school as well, I understand from your slide that it's a boarding school as well for children from outlying areas?

**MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** They have boarding programs but they stay with families within Sioux Lookout so that's how that happens, yeah.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So it isn't a separate residential ---

**MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** Not right now.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** --- building for them?

**MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** Not that I've heard, no.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yeah. Excellent, yeah. That's great news. Thank you.

Thank you so much for your submissions and your presentation today. This has been a wonderful eye opener for us and great education about what can happen when you want it to happen.

**MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB:** Yeah, when you want to work together. I mean, you know, there's First Nations issues and the town is taking them on. And they're involving other people by bringing them in and forming these committees, like the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. And that needs to happen across Canada, you
MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: We need to look at these things because we're not going anywhere. We're not going to go away.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: We're still going to have all these challenges, you know? We need more housing, we need more programs, yeah.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Well, thank you again.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah. Okay.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: This has been very helpful. Thank you.

MS. DARLENE ANGECONEB: Yeah, thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you. Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, that concludes the submissions portions that's scheduled to occur today. I'll seek your direction on adjourning to tomorrow morning at 8:30 when we're scheduled to reconvene with opening remarks.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes, we'll reconvene for submissions tomorrow morning at 8:30.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: Thank you.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We're adjourned for the day.

MS. MEREDITH PORTER: I see our MCs are here to assist with the daily closing.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for staying the day with us today and listening to all the presentations.

I just want to give a quick shout out to Darlene Angeconeb from Sioux Lookout, which is my territory. She is a relative of mine and I'm glad she was here to present on our families from the remote communities.

Right now, I'd like to call up Granny Bernie -- wherever she is -- and the Commissioners to start with the commitment sticks.

M. CHRISTIAN ROCK: Donc merci à tout le monde d’avoir assisté à cette journée. On va se préparer à terminer la journée avec la chanson... en fait, la chanson qui est liée avec les joueurs de tambours et puis bien on va commencer par demander à notre aînée Madame Bernie Williams de partager les bâtons d’engagement, donc Madame Williams.

MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS: Wow. What an incredible, incredible day and very powerful. And to all of you women, the women warriors, I want to say howa to
you for your resilience and your truths today.

My traditional name is (Native name) which means Golden Spruce Woman. I'm from the Haida Nation and I want to say howa to the people of this beautiful territory.

We're going to give the commitment sticks. This actually started in 2015 by an elder from Alkali Lake which is northern B.C., Fred Johnson. And the commitment stick signifies -- I just want to read it just very briefly -- is that,

"The commitment stick serves as your personal commitment to live violence free and as a reminder of the value of the lives of all of our Indigenous women and girls."

And again, I want to say howa to all of you with standing today. It was very powerful and as a family member and as a survivor, I want to say howa to the -- especially to the women chiefs here who have so courageously took it, you know, just took the bull by the horns and just moved. And I say thank you to you from the bottom of my heart.

I don't know many of you know that my mother was murdered in the Downtown East Side. So were three of my sisters. And this really means a lot to me as
a family member. Listening to your submissions, I have to believe in possibilities that this is going to be a great -- you know, at the end of this, it's going to be so great.

You know, I just can't believe that it's almost over and that, but I just want too say howa again to all of you for your hard work, for your -- just like, your whole commitment around this. And we would like to honour you with these commitment sticks, so if you'd just be so kind to be patient with me.

The Commissioners would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal Legal Services, Emily Hill and parties, if Emily is here with parties. They had to leave early. Okay.

The Commission or the Commissioners would like to acknowledge and honour the Native Women's Association of Canada, Virginia and parties, if you are here.

And the Commissioners would like to acknowledge and to recognize the Battered Women's Support Society, Summer Rain.

And the Commissioners would like to acknowledge and to recognize the Winnipeg Police Services, Kimberly Carswell, if she's here.

And the Commissioners would also like to
acknowledge and to honour the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Chief Heather Bear and party, if she's here, please.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS: And the Commissioners would like to acknowledge and to honour the Regina Treaty Status Indian Services Erica Beaudin and party.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

MS. ELDER BERNIE WILLIAMS: And finally, the Commissioners would like to acknowledge Sioux Lookout Collective, Darlene and party.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS: We’d like to invite Audrey Seagle and Summer Rain -- she’s already here -- and the women who would like to come up and drum to do the women’s warrior song.

Summer Rain, you can’t, you’ve got to stay over there. We’re honouring you. Go over there. Go stand in the corner.

And Ceejar, if you’re here too come on up, we’d like to honour.

MS. AUDREY SIEGL: This is a song that came to Martina Pierre in a sweat about 30 years ago of the Lil’wat Nation. It’s a song that everybody -- almost everybody knows as the Women’s Warrior Song. It’s a song
to be sung for strength, never to be sung for anger. And we know that whatever anger we feel is justified, but it's still our job, our duty, our honour to do something good with it, to not just become it.

So we sing, and we sing to honour you, we sing to raise our hands and say hych'ka, miigwech, hay hay, for the good work that you’ve done, that you’re doing here, and that we know you’ll continue to do.

(SONG/CHANT)

**MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And thank you for those who gave us permission to sing here today.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Beautiful song. Beautiful song.

Right now there was another special request for a young man by the name of Theland Kicknosway to come up. And he has a song that he would like to share as well regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. So we’re going to ask Theland to come up.

And if you want to stay up here or if we have family members that want to come up and join us in the circle -- Gerry Enfac (phonetic) -- please feel free to come up.

**M. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Donc on va ajouter une... on a un évènement spécial à ce moment-ci. On va ajouter la performance de Monsieur Theland Kicknoysway qui va se
joindre à nous pour faire une chanson, accompagné de sa famille et des membres de cercle des familles. Merci.

**MR. THELAND KICKNOSWAY:** (Indigenous language spoken)

Good afternoon, everyone. My English name is Theland Kicknoysway. I’m Cree and Potawatomi from Walpole First Nation Bkejwanong Territory. I’m part of the Wolf Clan. And I’m 15 years old.

I’m going to sing a song today that I composed myself about two years ago, and this song I made for my aunties Laurie Odjick and Bridget Tolley, and this song is for all of our missing and murdered Indigenous women and for the children left behind of them and the families and youth. So I sing this song for them. And so I say miigwech.

**(SONG/CHANT)**

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Meegwetch.

What a powerful song.

Maybe if I could ask some of the health supports that are in the room to come up and just support some of the families right now that are having a hard time. Because we know this is about our loved ones, and we need to support our family members that are here with us that have shared their truths and that are going through this process. And this process is still going on
and is going to happen after the Inquiry is over as well. I really think, you know, all the support and love that we have to give to our family members that are here in the circle and in the room is needed.

**M. CHRISTIAN ROCK:** Donc suite à cette performance de Monsieur Kicknoysway on va demander aux gens de la santé de venir à l'avant pour offrir leur aide aux gens qui pourraient être affectés par l’émotion, qui pourraient être affectés par la performance, qu’a rendu Monsieur Kicknoysway.

On va prendre quelques minutes puis on va poursuivre, merci.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So I know we're having a little bit of a difficult time, and we have our traditional folks with us, we have our helpers with us. You know, please use them and please reach out to them. And if you need a hug, I'll give you a hug. I'll support you any way I can. And I know it's difficult, but this is also a healing moment, and with the song that was shared, it's a beautiful thing. And we've got to remember, we're doing this for our loved ones and their spirits to continue on in their journey.

I don't know if our Elders want to share anything right now. Reta?

**ELDER RETA GORDON:** First of all, to the
Kicknosways, I want to thank you for lending us Theland this day. Theland, we're so proud of you. This is our future.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

ELDER RETA GORDON: Thank you, Theland.

Bless each and every one of you. Bless you. May the creator give you strength.

Sisterhood is formed authentically and spiritually between First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all other women in Canada by acknowledging their differences in historical and current realities. Being a sister means knowing our sisters, acknowledging that they own their stories. It means listening to them and knowing they can tell the stories better than we can. It means speaking with them when their voice is weak from bearing the burden of oppression, speaking for them when they are absent, but find out why they are absent and where are they.


And thank you to the drummers and thank you for the lady -- I'm sorry, I don't know her name -- that kept the Qulliq going all day. Eelee. Sorry. Thank you, Eelee.

(CLOSING PRAYERS/PRIÈRES DE CLÔTURE)

MR. VINCENT KICKNOSWAY: Boozhoo, aanii.
(Speaking Indigenous language.)

Creator, maker of life, we acknowledge this day, this day that we have gathered as we have collectively for the three days that we've come together to hear and utilize the gifts that we have.

I wish to acknowledge that first day that young woman, that woman, that female, as I as a man acknowledge how beauty and what the beauty is and what the beauty means for me in terms of the femininity that the Creator made possible. And now, on the third day, my heart is touched with this young one, that young boy who has arrived. It creates within my mind an acknowledgement to what life is meant to be in the future generations to come.

I, as a father, along with my wife, are very proud for our son to live and believe in what he does for the cause of MMIWG. It is so wonderful to hear the many peoples that have come forward to use their voice and for the many years, hopefully, to listen and to hear to take into account what needs to be done.

We acknowledge and give thanks to Gizos, the sun, who came abroad throughout this day. We are so grateful. We honour the waters, for the women who watch over those waters. We are so grateful for those waters, for they within our own selves allow them to flow freely.
We ask that those tears that fall upon Ashkaakamigokwe, Mother Earth, that they too recognize those who have gone missing and those who have had the unfortunancy [sic] of sadness of loss of life. We are so grateful.

We give thanks to all of life's creations within today's way of life, and we can only offer our prayers and hopes continually each and every day for that way of life to come back as those two young ones have come to visit us. We give thanks. I say to the four directions, meegwetch. (Speaking Indigenous language.)

Meegwetch.

MISS ELAINE KICKNOSWAY: And so boozhoo, aanii, tansi, kwe kwe, (speaking Indigenous language).

I give thanks for today. I give thanks for the sun as it came in the room to remind us of the outside and remind us that in these walls that life still can come in and touch us in that good way, just like the snow yesterday and the crisp cold today, and to remind us the warmth that we can still be provided with with one another.

I give thanks for the helpers. I give thanks for the ones that are behind the scenes watching over us. I give thanks for our families as they wait for us to come home.
I give thanks for, you know, those that check in on us, check in on our hearts, what they call that odemen (phonetic), that heart berry, and the continued growing of our blood, continued growing of our goodness so that we can reach and come back together again and just give thanks for the gracefulness of your breath today. And I say migwetch.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:**  So we'll ask our drum group to sing us home.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:**  We'll ask our drummers to send us home with a song.

(CEREMONIAL DRUMMING)

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:**  Migwetch.

Now we'll go to Eelee with the extinguishing of the qulliq.

**ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:**  (Speaking Inuktitut) Thank you for a day of abundance.

(Speaking in Inuktitut). Thank you to the drummers, and especially to Theland.

(Speaking in Inuktitut). I'd like to acknowledge a prestigious individual who was one of the Commissioners for the residential school legacy, Marie Wilson. Thanks for coming to observe and take in all the hearing.
(Speaking in Inuktitut)
Today we wept together, and as well it was healing on top of the crying.
(Speaking in Inuktitut)
Thank you from the crown of the earth and then to the heel of the earth. Have a good rest tonight.
(Speaking in Inuktitut) Let us pray.
(Speaking in Inuktitut).
I will now extinguish the qulliq, which is now at peace, lit as it's away from the draft.
(Speaking in Inuktitut).
Thank you.

**MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Just a quick reminder, tomorrow pipe ceremony's at 7:00 a.m. in the Quebec Room, and opening ceremonies start at 8:30.
Have a good night, and remember to drink lots of water and go for a walk to get grounded.
Migwetch.

--- Upon adjourning at 4:31 p.m./L'audience est ajournée à 16h31
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Félix Larose-Chevalier, 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.

__________________________
Félix Larose-Chevalier

Félix Larose-Chevalier
Dec 12, 2018