



Q Feb 23, 2018

## Changes to further support victims of crime

The province is making changes to improve how victims are treated in the criminal justice system.

An independent review into the treatment of “Angela Cardinal” includes several recommendations to address how victims of crime are treated, including when they are testifying in court as witnesses.

Specifically, the report recommended changes that include clarifying and updating sheriff and Crown prosecution policies, the best way to deliver services and supports to victims, and the coordination, transportation and housing of witnesses who may have to testify in court. Progress has already been made on several recommendations, with action underway on others, while some require further research and consultation.

“Angela’s story is a crucial reminder that we must do better, not only in her memory, but for all victims who come into contact with the justice system. When victims come forward to tell their story, we need to ensure they are not only heard, but that they are treated with courtesy, compassion and respect throughout every step towards justice. I want to thank Roberta Campbell for her recommendations, which are aimed at improving the system.”

- Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General

In Angela Cardinal’s memory, the government is working to create a \$50,000 bursary to assist Indigenous women and organizations. The province will have further discussions with organizations that work in this field to determine the best way to allocate the funding.

Along with ordering the independent investigation that resulted in the recommendations, Minister Ganley also tasked a special committee to recommend policies surrounding how victims of crime are treated. The committee’s work is expected to be finalized this spring.

### Quick facts

- The report is the result of an independent investigation by Roberta Campbell, a long-time criminal lawyer and outgoing president of the Law Society of Manitoba.
- The special committee is a working group of the Standing Committee on Prosecutions and Enforcement. It is made up of representatives from law enforcement, the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, Resolution and Court Administrative Services and Victims Services.
- At Minister Ganley’s request, two experts, Deb Tomlinson, CEO, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, and Grace Auger, a lawyer and former vice-president of the Indigenous Bar Association, were added to the working group.
- “Angela Cardinal” is the pseudonym media have used to identify the victim, as her name is protected by a publication ban.

Status of recommendations

Recommendations	Status
General	
It is recommended that JSG and other criminal justice entities create or amend vulnerable witness policies, to ensure a coordinated approach that takes into account the supports that vulnerable witnesses may need.	In progress
It is recommended that all parties within JSG develop guidelines to reinforce the roles and responsibilities of each organization with respect to victim and witness support. In addition, these organizations should work to improve lines of communication, to ensure information is shared appropriately.	In progress
It is recommended that all parties within JSG be provided with cultural competency training, specifically concerning Indigenous victims and witnesses, and training relating to witnesses who have experienced serious trauma.	In progress
It is recommended that the practice of having witnesses stand to testify be	Consultation with the Provincial Court in progress

eliminated in Alberta, especially where that witness is vulnerable.	
Victims Services	
It is recommended that JSG create a centralized Victim Services model, similar to models in other Canadian jurisdictions. This would include the creation and funding of dedicated victim service workers to service each jurisdiction in Alberta.	Further research and consultation
It is recommended that the Victim Services Unit (VSU) be separated from EPS and the RCMP, and operate at arms-length from both law enforcement and ACPS.	Further research and consultation
It is recommended that Victim Services include dedicated court workers, to help victims and other vulnerable witnesses navigate the court system.	In progress
It is recommended that Victim Services hire Indigenous victim services and court workers, who have been specifically trained to address the needs of Indigenous victims and witnesses.	In progress
It is recommended that the Victims of Crime Act be amended to include access to Victim Services as a right, and to clearly outline the relationship between ACPS, law enforcement and Victim Services.	Further research and consultation
Alberta Crown Prosecution Services (ACPS)	
	Further research and consultation

<p>It is recommended that ACPS clarify their policy concerning pre-trial interactions with complainants. It is further recommended that ACPS mandate pre-trial contact with all complainants in serious and violent cases.</p>	
<p>It is recommended that ACPS update their policy manual concerning the detention of witnesses, to clearly outline the options available to a prosecutor, and delineate where it is appropriate to seek detention under the Criminal Code.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>It is recommended that ACPS review their policy concerning the accommodation of witnesses, and coordinate alternative strategies with law enforcement where there are concerns about witness safety and/or flight risk.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>Alberta Sheriffs Branch/Edmonton Remand Centre</p>	
<p>It is recommended that the Alberta Sheriffs Branch and the Edmonton Remand Centre create policies regarding incarcerated witnesses, and prepare guidelines about how they should be managed.</p>	<p>Completed (end of February 2018)</p>
<p>It is recommended that the Alberta Sheriffs Branch review their current practices regarding shackling and handcuffing in Edmonton, to determine if those practices comply with their current policies.</p>	<p>Completed (end of February 2018)</p>
<p>It is recommended that the Alberta Sheriffs Branch review their policy</p>	<p>Completed (end of February 2018)</p>

<p>concerning 'keep separate' inmates, to ensure that incompatibles are not being housed or transported together.</p>	
<p>It is recommended that an independent review be commissioned to review the current practices respecting the use of physical restraints on witnesses in Edmonton.</p>	<p>Completed (end of February 2018)</p>

## Listen to the news conference

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## Related information

Report on the Incarceration of Angela Cardinal

Minister Ganley's initial statement on the treatment of "Angela Cardinal" (June 2017)

## Multimedia

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## Media inquiries

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