NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Written Closing Submissions

Animakee Wa Zhing #37
Eagle Lake First Nation
Grassy Narrows First Nation
Obashkaandagaang First Nation
Ojibway Nation of Saugeen

December 14, 2018
National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Written Closing Submissions
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***For ease of reference, a summary of our recommendations and sub-recommendations is found at Schedule “A”***
INTRODUCTION

Overview of Our Position

1. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (the “National Inquiry”) is an important opportunity to honour the truths of our peoples and to develop meaningful and lasting recommendations to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls and to further support our strong and vibrant communities. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in such a significant endeavour to improve the lives of our peoples.

2. During the application process, each of our First Nations applied for independent standing, however, we were granted standing as a single collective party. At Schedule “B” you will find a brief overview of our communities.

3. While each of our communities is unique, and faces distinct challenges, we have done our best to compile a list of recommendations which, if implemented would assist in not only addressing some of the systemic causes of violence affecting Indigenous women and girls, but also supporting the overall health and safety of our communities.

4. We face many obstacles to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of our members. This includes responding to systemic causes of violence, including sexual violence, facing Indigenous women and girls – violence that is rooted in underlying economic, institutional, and historical causes. Often, our attempts to improve the lives of our members is frustrated by the existing and restrictive institutional frameworks within which we are forced to operate. As Indigenous people, we are in the best position to determine our needs.

5. Due to limitations in resources and timing of the hearings, we were only able to attend three of the institutional hearings. Therefore, our recommendations are focused on the following topics:
   - Police Policies and Procedures
   - The Family: Child Welfare, Supports to Family, Domestic Violence
   - Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking

6. Our recommendations have three overarching themes: AGENCY, SUSTAINED RESOURCES, and UNDERSTANDING. Agency means having the jurisdiction and control to govern our communities and make decisions reflecting our unique community customs, practices, and traditions. To act on our decisions, and as part of the Treaty relationship, we must have sustained resources to do so. Finally, all of Canada must understand our unique histories resulting
from the colonization of what is now called ‘Canada’ – although this is important for everyone, it is especially important for anyone providing services to Indigenous peoples on or off reserve.

**OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION**

7. While each hearing focused on different topics, there were some clear reoccurring issues affecting the wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls. The failure to provide our communities with equitable resources, services, and access to basic human rights such as safe housing results in ineffective policing, a disproportionate representation of our children in the child welfare systems and puts our women and girls at further risk for sexual exploitation and violence. Given the prevalence of these issues, their impacts on the successful provision of many different services, and their overall impact and the health and safety of our women and girls, these overarching recommendations should be viewed as priority recommendations. The recommendations stemming from these overarching issues are below:

1) **RECOMMENDATION:** (a) Canada must end all inequalities in federal services provided to Indigenous peoples (education, health, water, child welfare, etc.) and (b) Canada must provide ample and sustained discretionary funding to Indigenous communities to ensure access to safe and non-overcrowded housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Recommendations:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• A major funding injection is required to address housing shortages, housing repairs, and housing-related infrastructure deficits (sewer and water services and access to potable water at home).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ample and sustained funding is needed for housing and related sewer and water infrastructure.</td>
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<td>• A new funding model is required that ensures Indigenous communities have discretion and control over how funding used to address community priorities.</td>
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8. Additional and sustained resources are needed to ensure equal services are provided to Indigenous communities. The existing services in our community are limited and chronically under-funded and restricted by non-discretionary and short-term funding. Further, our members often do not have access to the services they need in their communities – services that are widely available in non-Indigenous communities.

9. Indigenous women and girls must routinely leave their communities to access services that are not available in their community. As a result, they must leave the support of their family and friends, and travel to unfamiliar, urban centres where they are vulnerable to the dangers associated
with these cities. These services, such as expanded health care and addiction treatment, are needed in our communities. Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service (“NAPS”) Detective Constable Alana Morrison strongly highlighted the need for community-based support services:

“…I can't say enough about not having to make a choice between leaving your community and picking up and going and leaving your children. So that would definitely be one of my strongest recommendations for that community-based support.”

10. Increasing funding for services for Indigenous-led and based mental health and addictions is extremely important. There is a connection between substance abuse and violence. The root causes of addiction are complex, inter-related and are based on both recent and intergenerational trauma. For example, as heard in evidence at the hearing on human trafficking and sexual exploitation — it is drugs and alcohol that are often used to lure individuals into trafficking and are “used as a mechanism of keeping individuals within trafficking situations.” Comprehensive community-based approaches addictions are an important response to violence and should be located in and designed by Indigenous communities.

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11. Increased and equitable services are needed, but Indigenous children, women and girls need substantive equity given the historical collective trauma experienced. There is a higher duty to provide additional services:\textsuperscript{8}

“…Historical trauma is cumulative and intergenerational in its impacts, meaning its cumulative effects are passed on. These various sources of trauma that originated from outside the Indigenous communities…generated a wide range of dysfunctional and hurtful behaviours, such as physical and sexual abuse, which is recycled generation after generation within the community. As a result, we see negative behaviour, such as alcohol abuse, sexual. Physical and emotional abuse, child neglect and violent crime. The link between the effects of past events like these and adverse outcomes in the present have been well-documented.”\textsuperscript{9}

12. Together, the lack of integrated healthcare, education, and necessary community infrastructure directly connects to violence in our communities,\textsuperscript{10} and also contributes to the over-representation of Indigenous children in care:

Overall, unless the factors of poverty, poor housing and substance misuse linked back to the impacts of residential school are better addressed, and resourced, in ways that are directed by the respective Aboriginal communities, there is little evidence that substantial progress will be made on making meaningful reductions in the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care.\textsuperscript{11}

13. Daniel Bellegarde, Executive Director of the FSIN Treaty Governance Office and Chair of the File Hills First Nation Police Service Board of Police Commissioners spoke about the importance of breaking the current cycles impacting Indigenous women and girls: “the cycle of poverty, the cycle of colonization, the cycle of public policy…”\textsuperscript{12}


14. Almost every institutional and expert witness referenced poverty and lack of housing as key contributing factors affecting the health, safety, and overall wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls. It is a critical issue. Long-term, stable housing is needed. Inadequate housing directly impacts on a person’s health, safety and wellbeing. For example, a lack of and inadequate housing impacts children in care to remain in their home communities and their ability to return to their communities.

**POLICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

“*You are entitled to nothing less than our best work in your communities. I believe it’s never too late to do the right thing*” - Commissioner Brenda Lucki, RCMP

15. Policing in First Nation communities is unlike policing in non-Indigenous communities. The imposition of colonial law and policies has had many long-lasting and harmful effects on our communities: a revolving door of officers and the failure to understand our history and culture has often resulted in poor communication and poor relationships between leadership and community members. The ability of police services to serve our communities is also further hindered by insufficient training and resources. Improving police services requires a multifaceted approach, which incorporates our unique cultures, the social, economic and historical, causes of violence/crime, and our right to self-determine how we are served.

2) **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Police must receive training on the unique cultural, social, economic and historical realities of the First Nation Communities that they Serve.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Cultural competency training and education must be mandatory not only for new recruits, but also for established officers as a part of ongoing and yearly block training.
- Ample and sustained funding must be provided to First Nations to develop and provide cultural competency and community orientation training for police officers.

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• Officers must participate in mandatory community orientations that are developed, designed, and provided by the community in which they are serving.
• Police services must develop policies to ensure new officers, and any officer transferred to a new community, shadow officers who have experience working in the community and who are ideally from that community.

16. Strong trusting relationships are critical to improving policing services for all Indigenous peoples. Throughout the hearing on police practices, the evidence was clear that relationships and trust between Indigenous communities and the police need improving. Chief Superintendent Mark Pritchard of the Ontario Provincial Police (“OPP”) stated:

“there’s a long history, a lot of valid reasons for Indigenous people not to trust the police, and that’s why it’s so important for us to make every effort we can to break through those barriers.”

17. An important part of building this relationship and trust is ensuring police officers understand the communities they serve. Commissioner Brenda Lucki of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (“RCMP”) acknowledged greater understanding about the uniqueness and history of each community is needed. Retired Chief Clive Weighill said:

“there certainly has to be a huge educational component on the history, the spirituality, what’s happened to the Indigenous people right across Canada. Every police officer should be very, very fluent in what’s happened with residential schools, what’s happened with colonization, The White Paper back in the 70’s, the Sixties Scoop, and contemporary issues and downfalls that are happening right now in our Indigenous community. Every police officer in Canada should be able to just tell you that right off the top of their head.”

18. Anyone employed by a police service, including a First Nation police service, should be educated on cultural sensitivity, even before applying to be an officer. Further, these officers

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must have a degree of compassion because victims are sensitive to an officer’s demeanour. Accordingly, cultural competency should be assessed in the officer application process. Individuals who are unwilling to undertake steps to increase their understanding of Indigenous issues as a pre-requisite for applying should not be admitted into police training academies. This early testing, like all educational components should be designed by Indigenous people to ensure that the cultural and historical knowledge being examined is both relevant and accurate. Additionally, prior to admission potential bias and racism should be assessed in all applicants.

19. While increased training and course work at the police college is important for working with Indigenous communities, it is not enough. Officers must understand the history, traditions, and protocols unique to each community in order to effectively work in the community they are serving: “And, it’s true, we can learn from books and exercises, but the real cross-cultural training has to come from our communities.”

20. This knowledge and understanding comes from consultation and relationship building with a community’s leadership, Elders, and other members. This approach was also supported in recommendations from an Ontario Coroner’s Inquest:

NAPS was to “consult with community leadership to develop a community policing model that focuses on building positive relationships and trust with Indigenous communities where it provides services.” [The Verdict of the Corner’s Jury in the Inquest into the Death of Romeo Wesley].

21. Detective Constable Alana Morrison explained the benefits of pairing new officers with respected and more experienced officers. She explained that these new officers are more likely to

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receive the trust of the community they are serving. Additionally, the new officers have the added benefit of learning the community’s history from that officer. This approach was also supported in recommendations from two Ontario Coroner’s Inquests:

“make best efforts to ensure that officers are partnered with appropriately experienced officers in the community, with junior officers being paired with senior officers” [The Verdict of the Corner’s Jury in the Inquest into the Death of Romeo Wesley].

“Ensure that all police officers receive training with a senior officer/coach officer in the community in which they will be stationed to ensure that officers are familiar with the community residents, by-laws, policies and practices” [The Verdict of the Corner’s Jury in the Inquest into the Death of Lena Mary Anderson].

22. This practice would contribute to building trusting relationships and a deeper understanding of the community in which the officers are serving.

3) **RECOMMENDATION**

Police services must work with Indigenous communities to develop communication policies with communities they serve and with families with regarding investigations.

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Indigenous communities should receive funding to establish and train a community-police liaison position to facilitate community-police relationships and communication.
- Police services should implement mechanisms with Indigenous communities and families (e.g. a mutually agreed upon written protocol) that ensures how and when information will be shared regarding an investigation.

23. Communication between the police and Indigenous communities they serve is crucial and was a common theme in the police hearings. Deputy Commissioner Brenda Butterworth-Carr of

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the RCMP stated that: “we hear continuously from our families the necessity of making sure we are communicating properly, we are communicating effectively.”

24. Chief Superintendent Mark Pritchard also spoke to this, stating that: “the flow of information and the communication is crucial”. Full-time community-police liaisons can play a role in bridging communication gaps and ensuring communities and families are updated regarding missing person investigations. Retired Chief Clive Weighill indicated that community liaisons are one of the “strongest tools” available.

25. Mutually agreed on written communication protocols are another way to improve communication and trust with Indigenous leadership and families. Protocols are an important tool for ensuring effective and appropriate communication while also fostering trusting relationships. Leadership and family must have input into what, when, how, to whom and in what language information is shared with each respectively.

26. Written communication protocols were recommended by Chief Superintendent Mark Pritchard. He also recognized the critical role Chief and Council play in investigation.

communication protocols not only ensure families are informed, but also to the extent possible and appropriate, the community.\textsuperscript{69}

4) \textbf{RECOMMENDATION:}

\begin{quote}
Police Services should develop programs in consultation with Indigenous communities that support creating positive and lasting relationships with the community they serve.
\end{quote}

\textbf{Sub-Recommendations:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Sustained and ample funding should be offered for programs, such as Project Journey, that aim to foster positive relationships between Indigenous youth and the police while also providing educational, cultural, and work/experiential opportunities for youth.
  \item Funding should be provided to Indigenous communities to develop community-based programs and events that support building positive relationships between community members and the police.
\end{itemize}

27. First Nation Communities need to be consulted on what services are required because what the police services believe to be important, what the statistics tell them is important, may not be what is important to the community.\textsuperscript{70}

28. Part of what our communities need is a shift from reactionary policing to preventative policing. Commissioner Brenda Lucki indicated that successful preventative measures are infinitely better than even the best investigations post crime.\textsuperscript{71} Daniel Bellegarde, further stated that in certain circumstances there is only enforcement, the police respond to incidents but don’t have the time, training or desire to implement preventative policing.\textsuperscript{72}

29. To facilitate this preventative approach, police services need to be implemented with other resources in mind. Police need to work together with other agencies such as health, education, and


social services to provide a holistic approach to: “ensuring the safety of women …and anybody in vulnerable circumstances, whether it’s mental health, addictions, violence.”  

30. Commissioner Brenda Lucki of the RCMP stated that it is very difficult to implement a successful preventative approach to policing when the people they are trying to assist do not even have access to safe housing: “So, we need to look to housing, education, employment, and… as a community, I think we’re stronger if we work together.”

31. Daniel Bellegarde reiterated this sentiment when he said:

“The whole direction of our recommendations is to tie governance of police services with overall governance within the community, and that's so we can have justice, not only in what we commonly see as justice within the police service or the justice system, but justice in health, justice in economics, justice in education, justice in social programming. That's justice. I don't mean laws, I mean justice. And to do that, what the police service has to do is to be governed in such a way that brings together the various elements in our communities to provide that overall approach to caring and sharing and support to those people at risk and to those people who want to continue to develop and to grow as individuals and productive members of the community.”

32. The relationships between our communities and the police are fractured. Police Services must take responsibility and make serious efforts to create meaningful, trusting relationships with Indigenous communities and their members. Improving these relationships is directly connected to providing effective police response to incidents in our communities.

33. Positive relationships are especially important when there is a crisis in our communities. Chief Superintendent Pritchard gave evidence that: “trying to build a relationship of trust during a crisis, it’s too late. You need to build the relationship before that, so that during the time of crisis, that relationship has already been built.”

34. One way the police can improve this relationship is to work closely, outside the justice system with our communities’ members, particularly with the youth. Both Sergeant Dee Stewart, Officer in Charge of “E” Division Indigenous Policing Services of the RCMP⁷⁷ and Chief Superintendent Pritchard spoke highly of the value in police providing community-based activities for youth. Chief Superintendent Pritchard recommended funding and implementing programs such as Project Venture, Project Journey and Project Sunset⁷⁸ and recommended these programs be expanded beyond communities policed by the OPP. He explained the benefit in having officers specifically assigned and dedicated to these relationship-building programs and the need for capacity through ongoing funding.⁷⁹

35. These programs also allow our youth and community members to share their knowledge and culture while also benefitting from building work and educational skills, and cultural opportunities. They have the potential, not only to improve our trust in the police, but provide police officers with a better understanding of our unique cultures and the concerns of the people they serve.

36. Additionally, Indigenous communities must receive funding to support police-community relationship building. Retired Chief Clive Weighill agreed there is not enough funding for Indigenous lead community-based organizations to assist the police in establishing trust with victims of crime and Indigenous families.⁸⁰ The importance of creating lasting relationships between the police and our communities to effective preventative policing cannot be understated. Until the police gain an understanding of our members’ needs and our members feel that they can trust the police, our members will continue to be at risk.

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5) **RECOMMENDATION:**

Police Services must prioritize recruiting and training Indigenous officers, especially female officers.

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Police Services should establish mentorship programs to facilitate recruiting and enrolling more Indigenous people, especially females, into police training programs.
- Every community should have an officer dedicated to liaising with youth, attending community events, providing informational sessions and assisting community members with applying to the police service.
- Police Services and Police Colleges should hold information sessions in Indigenous communities. Where impossible, funding should be provided to allow participants to travel from their community to the required locations.

37. Police officers who are not from our communities and who are not Indigenous generally do not understand our community’s unique policing needs. Officers that have an intimate knowledge of the unique characteristics and circumstances of our communities are important. Indigenous officers, especially those who are members of our community have lived experience that is valuable to serving our communities. Having Indigenous police officers can promote a sense of trust and comfort – for Indigenous people, especially when the officer can speak the community’s language. Therefore, increasing the number of Indigenous police officers is important and has potential to enhance the police response to violence against women in First Nation communities.

38. The objective and benefit for recruiting and retaining more Indigenous police officers is not new. For example, the jury in the Ontario Coroner’s Inquest into the death of Romeo Wesley recommended that NAPS: “make best efforts to recruit and retain Indigenous officers so that … is

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staffed by Indigenous officers who are fluent in the language of their assigned community to the greatest extent possible.96

39. Community outreach and mentorship opportunities are an important aspect of recruiting Indigenous officers and delivering police services.97 Mentorship opportunities are important because they assist potential applicants in understanding, and reduces possible barriers to their success.98

40. Another obstacle preventing Indigenous peoples from becoming police officers is the requirement to travel to attend information sessions, to obtain the necessary training and certifications, and to write the required examinations.99 Where possible, information sessions and training/examinations should be held in communities to reduce the travel burden for applicants.100 Where it is impossible to hold training in the community, the applicant should receive funding to ensure they can travel to and attend training/examinations.

6) **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Police Services must create culturally appropriate, safe, and accessible ways for Indigenous people, especially women, to report crime and to report police misconduct.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**
- The complainant should have a mechanism to track their complaint.101
- Reporting mechanisms must not risk the complainant’s safety or privacy.
- Indigenous communities should receive ample and sustained funding to operate a safehouse/shelter that serves as a safe space for women and their children (lack of safe spaces is a barrier to reporting crime).

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• In consultation with Indigenous communities, Police Services should develop third party and other reporting approaches to increase reporting and victim safety.
• Reporting mechanisms should be available in Indigenous languages.

Reporting Crime

41. There are privacy and safety barriers for Indigenous women reporting crime. NAPS Detective Constable Alana Morrison explained:

“the barriers to reporting are so horrific in my mind because, first and foremost, when a woman comes forward to police in the community, no matter how small the community or how large, the community gets wind.”

She also explained that victims usually remain living in the community with the perpetrator and/or their family. Fear of reprisal from the perpetrator and/or their family are real concerns that impact on reporting violence, as well as fear of being judged by other community members.

42. The lack of safe spaces in communities is also connected to underreporting. To address this, Indigenous communities need safe places, such as safehouses/shelters where women can go and have the opportunity to contact the police if desired. Police can instead meet with the woman in the safe space, which is less public than the police station or elsewhere in the community.

43. To improve reporting options, it is also recommended that police services consult with Indigenous communities to create third-party reporting mechanisms that support victim safety and

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to offer culturally appropriate ways to allow individuals to share what they have experienced or know.  

**Reporting Police Misconduct**

44. It harms our communities and our relationship with police services when officers fail to discharge their duties in a respectful, fair, and culturally appropriate manner. Therefore, the ability to report police misconduct is an important aspect of police accountability and civilian oversight. Commissioner Brenda Lucki supported civilian oversight: “The more transparent we are as a police organization, the better we are…”

45. Reporting mechanisms for both crime and police misconduct need to be available in languages spoken by our communities. Language barriers prevent Indigenous people from reporting both officer misconduct and crimes. Indigenous peoples, especially Elders, may face language barriers when communicating with officers that prevent them from reporting crime and/or reporting police misconduct. Therefore, a more accessible and culturally appropriate complaint process is needed to increase Indigenous oversight over police and to foster positive relationships with the police.

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7) **RECOMMENDATION:**

Police Services with overlapping jurisdiction must develop protocols to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear for responding to and investigating incidents involving missing and murdered Indigenous women.

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Clear policies and agreements must be in place between all police services with overlapping jurisdiction that determine policies, procedures, and responsibilities for responding to missing person and homicide incidents where more than one police service is involved.
- There must be measure of accountability built in to these policies and procedures to ensure that a failure to abide has repercussions.
- Police Services in our communities should have an officer delegated to liaising with other police services who may have overlapping jurisdiction.

46. Multiple police services can have overlapping jurisdiction in our communities. For example, in response to a missing person or homicide event, the Treaty #3 Police Service and the OPP may both be involved to provide assistance with response and investigations for a single incident.\(^{113}\) In our experience, we are concerned this causes jurisdictional confusion and communication gaps that impact the quality and extent of police investigations that may result in poorer quality investigations into missing persons or homicide incidents.

47. Danielle Bellegarde supported the creation of MOUs and having: “accountability factors built into performance appraisals of the police service”\(^{114}\) To address this, we recommend that there are clear agreements in place outlining the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for multiple police services to effectively respond to incidents.

48. Chief Superintendent Pritchard explained there is great value in clear written police procedure policies as they:

> “provide clear expectations to officers of what’s expected of them when they’re conducting investigations. It’s to bring consistency from one end of the province to another, so we’re all working off the same page. And also, to provide accountability to ensure these investigations are done properly.”\(^{115}\)

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49. Although there is a memorandum of understanding between the OPP and NAPS, Chief Superintendent Pritchard was not aware of any other written protocols or policies in place to ensure responsibilities between various police services are clearly delineated in investigations with overlapping jurisdiction.\(^{116}\) Therefore, given the role and importance of written police policies, similar written policies between police services with overlapping jurisdiction should be implemented to ensure police services are effectively communicating, are held accountable, and investigations are conducted in a consistent manner with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

50. Due to the potential for confusion over responsibilities and ineffective communication in cases with overlapping police jurisdiction, having officers from the police services who typically serve our communities assigned specifically to work with other police forces, such as the OPP, can improve communications on investigating missing persons and homicide investigations.\(^ {117}\)

8) **RECOMMENDATION**

**First Nation Police Services must receive equitable funding and resources.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- First Nation Police Services such as the Treaty #3 Police Service and NAPS must have access to the same funding, resources, support, training, and equipment as other Ontario Police Services.
- First Nation Police Services should receive ample and sustainable funding to ensure they are able to have specialized police units.
- First Nation Police Services such as NAPS and the Treaty #3 Police Services should receive ample resources to ensure access to the PowerCase program.

51. Our communities are primarily policed by First Nation Police Services. Unfortunately, self-administered police services are notoriously underfunded and often do not have enough officers to effectively respond to calls for service.\(^ {118}\) Every Canadian citizen requires equitable police services and resources available to them.\(^ {119}\) To enhance safety and effectiveness in our communities, First

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Nation Police Services should have equitable resources, tools, training, and opportunities as other police services in Ontario. 120

52. The limited number of officers impacts the ability of police to respond to calls for service and perform thorough investigations. Ample and sustainable resources are needed to ensure a sufficient number of officers are serving each community. 121 Officers sometimes must bounce quickly from call to call, 122 which leads to being overworked and fatigued. This ultimately affects the quality of investigations and in turn, the chances a file will be prosecuted. 123 Therefore, it is important First Nation Police Services, such as the Treaty #3 Police Service, and NAPS receive the funding required so enough officers are hired to meet the policing needs of each community they serve. 124

53. A key factor contributing to the inequity is short term funding. First Nation Police Services should receive guaranteed long-term funds like other provincial and federal police forces. People living on a reserve deserve the same quality of police protection received by someone living in an urban location. 125

54. Additionally, to ensure equitable policing, First Nation Police Services should be provided with funding to establish units specialized in investigating murder and missing persons cases. These specialized units ensure that officers can have specialized training to deal with different types of crime and can become highly skilled at dealing with these types of investigations.


Detective Constable Alana Morrison recommended that First Nation Police services receive funding to ensure they are able to have specialized units and the specialized training that would accompany these units similar to those in other police services such as the OPP. Finally, Chief Superintendent Pritchard spoke to the importance of PowerCase software, indicating that the software analyzes information looking for linkages in investigative files by comparing the investigative files of all police services in Ontario. He stated that this program prevents information from: “slipping through the cracks”, and provides accountability to the investigations. When asked if First Nation Police Services have access to the program he indicated that while there are a few with access, First Nation Police Services are not funded for that and that as a result, not all sexual assaults or missing person investigations in the jurisdiction of First Nation Police Services are documented on PowerCase. Chief Superintendent Pritchard agreed it would be helpful if all First Nation Police Services had access to the PowerCase software. He indicated that the First Nation Police Services wanted access to PowerCase, but lacked resources/funding.

THE FAMILY

“150 years has brought us to now, where we have thousands of missing and murdered women and girls, and thousands of children who are…not in their homes, and our children need to come home…” – Cora Morgan

56. Healthy families and children are very important to our communities and are intimately connected to the safety and wellbeing of women and girls. We want our children to grow up connected to their families, friends, community and culture. Unfortunately, the current child and family welfare system does not always support families in a way that keeps families, community, and culture connected. Change is needed.

57. Witnesses in the National Inquiry agreed that the current child welfare system is directly connected to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In particular, early childhood adversity (e.g. removing a child from their family at a young age) has a range of negative health, social, and cognitive outcomes. An Indigenous driven child welfare system that focuses on supporting families, culture, and togetherness is needed.

9) **RECOMMENDATION:**

Indigenous communities must have the jurisdiction to design, implement, and control child and family welfare services in their communities that are equitably funded.

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- A new approach for funding and providing child and family welfare services is needed that recognizes Indigenous jurisdiction for child and family welfare – an approach that ensures Indigenous communities have the option to assume control over providing child and family welfare services in their communities in accordance with community customs, practices, and traditions.
- Children who require care should not be removed from their community.
- Funding for child and family welfare services must not connect to the number of children in care.

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58. Prior to colonization, our communities had established practices and customs protecting the wellbeing of our children – practices and customs that remain today. The imposed child welfare system does not adequately address the needs of our families and children and too often causes harm to children, families, and our communities. To address this, Indigenous communities should have unequivocal authority to determine how our communities receive and deliver services that best meets the unique needs of each individual community.

59. Support is needed for Indigenous driven institutions and initiatives “which aim to bring children home that are rooted in First Nation ways of being and knowing, including revitalizing and codifying First Nation laws.” Cora Morgan eloquently stated:

“we have our inherent ways of caring for each other. And, we know that those ways are more optimal, that we have to go back to…taking care of the children in the community, and that any child of a community is all of our responsibility, and that there is the adequate supports and resources to be able to focus on prevention.”

60. A significant barrier to Indigenous designed and led child welfare systems is the current legislative and funding frameworks. The federal government has recently proposed legislation that purports to overhaul the existing Indigenous child welfare system. To do so, future legislation must recognize, support, and fund agencies and child and family welfare models developed and exercised under Indigenous community laws. This recommendation is not new, in 2000 the Joint National Policy review recommended that Canada expand the child welfare programs that it funds to include those developed by First Nation jurisdictions and note solely those operating under provincial legislation.

Concerns: Existing Child Welfare System too often removes Children from their Community and Fails to meet the Needs of our Children and Families

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61. We have several concerns about the existing child welfare system. For example, we are concerned that that too frequently, children are placed in care outside of our communities – much like residential school and the 60s scoop, children are being removed from their families and culture and placed in homes geographically and culturally different than their own, which has caused inter-generational trauma in our communities. Further, when our children are placed outside of our communities, they are particularly vulnerable to impacts on their physical, emotional, and psychological health from losing their connection to their family and community. Systems are needed that focus on prevention and support keeping families together.

62. Where safe, keeping children with their family and in their community is critical to both the child and mother’s wellbeing. This principle was supported by Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond who is a tenured professor at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia. She was qualified as an expert witness in the areas of law, legal and investigative practice specifically investigative reporting, with special expertise in child and family services, child welfare, custom adoptions, treaty rights, circle court process, and domestic and sexual violence against women and girls. In evidence, Dr. Turpel-Lafond stated: “The most important thing is to keep [children] inside their family where they can have connection to culture, language, identity, and territory.”

Dr. Turpel-Lafond further added that keeping children within their immediate or extended family is a right protected under the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, a convention ratified by Canada.

63. Where a child needs to be placed in care, every effort should be made to place them in their community. Inappropriately, under the current system, people from outside of our community and culture have defined the criteria for what constitutes a suitable home for our children. Although there may be extended family or community members in our communities who wish to take children in, factors decided by external colonial systems determine they are not suitable placements. These factors are all too often related to structural inequalities outside of our control, such as:

a. insufficient bedroom size;\textsuperscript{142}
b. multiple children sharing a bedroom (something that is common in reserve homes);\textsuperscript{143}
c. the number of children already residing in the home;\textsuperscript{144}
d. a lack of infrastructure funds also results in a lack of ability to maintain housing; mold in homes has prevented children from staying with their family;\textsuperscript{145}
e. having older teenage or adult children living in the home;\textsuperscript{146}
f. having someone reside in the home who has a criminal record including minor offences from decades earlier;\textsuperscript{147} and
g. the age of the potential caregivers – grandparents are denied because of their age.\textsuperscript{148}

64. To address this, Indigenous communities should have the authority to determine what a suitable living arrangement is in accordance with our customs, traditions, and culture.\textsuperscript{149} Our communities should be empowered and supported to determine our own child welfare systems.\textsuperscript{150}

65. The child welfare system as it currently exists is not appropriate for Indigenous children.\textsuperscript{151} Change is needed. The current legislative framework does not provide enough support for


culturally-based practices around child and family wellness.152 The current system does not consider some fundamental things that are key to doing good work with Indigenous communities.153 For example, current child welfare models fail to address the intergenerational effects of trauma resulting from effects of residential schools and the 60s scoop.154 Consequently, what constitutes the best interests of the child must be re-examined to focus on the right of the child to stay connected to their community, family, nation and identity, and ensure that children are not removed from their homes due to poverty.155

66. Throughout her testimony Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a professor in the school of social work at McGill University and Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society spoke about the importance of self-determination and self-jurisdiction for First Nation Communities. She further declared that there needs to be recognition for the fact that: “the current child welfare system already has a culture and a language, and that is often a Western culture and a language that is often sometimes at odds with the experiences of Indigenous peoples.”156 It has been established that:

“The Government of Canada recognizes the inherent right of self-government as an existing Aboriginal right under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982...The federal government also recognizes that Aboriginal governments and institutions require the jurisdiction and authority to act in a number of areas in order to give practical effect to the inherent right of self-government.”157

Accordingly, there should be support for First Nations to assume “full jurisdiction over child welfare.”

10) **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Professionals and foster families must receive training to understand the unique historical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances of the communities they serve.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Indigenous communities should receive ample and sustained resources to develop and provide this training to all professionals and foster families serving their community.
- All professionals involved in providing child and family welfare related services to Indigenous communities must receive this training (e.g. child and family service agency staff, doctors, nurses, counsellors, etc.).

67. Families residing on reserves face unique challenges. The history of colonialization has resulted in poverty, insufficient housing, addiction and trauma. Additionally, our communities have traditional ways of dealing with child welfare. If professionals and foster families are not sensitive to these cultural and historical aspects of our communities their conduct can further damages the health of our members.

68. All professionals and staff in the child and family welfare system providing services to Indigenous communities should have a deep understanding and education on the unique historical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances of the community they are serving. This educational content should be developed, designed, and offered by the community.

69. This training and education should also extend to foster families caring for a child from a community that is not their own. Foster families play an important role in supporting a child’s ongoing connection with their home community, culture, and identity. Therefore, foster families must also receive training and education on their foster child’s home community and directly engage with that community as part of their foster parent role.

70. The current child welfare system does not address the needs of our community. Part of the problem is a lack of cultural sensitivity from social workers and foster families. Failure of these


individuals to accurately understand the needs of our community perpetuates the commodification of children and results in long term harm to our members, therefore they must receive training to understand the unique historical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances of our communities.

11) **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Funding is needed to establish independent Indigenous child and family advocate positions to support families and children with understanding and navigating the child welfare system.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Create independent advocacy positions to assist families with navigating the child welfare system.
- Create independent advocacy positions to assist children who are in care with ensuring they get the best care possible.
- Advocates, with consent, must have the ability to access child/family information to support children and their families.  

71. We are concerned that our families do not always have the resources, supports, and tools to effectively understand and advocate for their rights in the child welfare system. Child welfare systems are complex, intimidating, and can be difficult for families to understand and effectively advocate for their children, which can in turn negatively impact their ability to keep their children.  

72. Many mothers do not have the supports they require to navigate this difficult and intimidating process; some mothers may have been in the care of child welfare agencies themselves, which prevented them from making the types of connections with their community and families that would support them during this difficult time.  

their rights and recourse options.\textsuperscript{165} This plays a role in keeping families together and getting the prevention services needed to support that family.

12) **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Indigenous children in care outside of their home-community must remain connected to their community and culture.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

- Indigenous communities must receive resources to foster and promote culture and positive cultural identities.
- Child and family welfare agencies must create and implement plans to ensure children remain connected to their home-community and culture.\textsuperscript{166}
- Child and family welfare agencies must receive funding specific to ensuring children in care are able to visit and participate in community activities and events.

73. The current child welfare system has perpetuated colonial impacts of abolishing cultural identities, forcibly removing children from their families and communities, breaking family and community bonds, and perpetuating cultural shaming.\textsuperscript{167} However, culture is a significant protective factor for responding to the effects of colonization and plays a role in supporting and healing our communities.\textsuperscript{168} It is critically important for Indigenous peoples to know who we are and where we came from.\textsuperscript{169}

74. Research shows that “cultural pride and renewal have a positive impact on one’s ability to cope with trauma and depression.”\textsuperscript{170} Consequently, there is a critical and continued need for


resources that support and promote culture and positive cultural identities.\textsuperscript{171} These programs and supports are valuable for responding to childhood adversity and for keeping children and their families connected to their community’s cultural identity.

13) \textbf{RECOMMENDATION:}

\textit{Supportive transitional programs are needed to assist youth leaving the child and family service system/aging out of care.}

75. Foster care is intended to be temporary; however, many Indigenous children spend their entire childhood and youth in care. This can be incredibly harmful because the foster care system was not designed to raise children.\textsuperscript{172} Many youths who grow up in foster care face tremendous adversity when leaving the child welfare system and have complicated needs.\textsuperscript{173} For example, children may have spent ten years apart from their family and have lost their language, community-connection, and family ties. These children when leaving care may instead search for this belonging elsewhere, for example, finding it in a city and this can be problematic.\textsuperscript{174}

76. Consequently, extensive supports are needed to support youth exiting the child welfare system. These supports should include reconnecting youth with their home community\textsuperscript{175} in addition to mental and physical health assistance and life-skills training.

14) \textbf{RECOMMENDATION:}

\textit{Child and family welfare programs must focus on holistic family support and prevention (not protection/apprehension).}

\textbf{Sub-Recommendations:}

- Parents must receive support and resources to help keep families together (e.g. parenting classes, cultural support, life skills, educational services, child care, income support, etc.).


See Recommendation 8 - Indigenous communities must have the jurisdiction to design, implement, and control child and family welfare services in their communities that are equitably funded.

77. Based on our experience, we are concerned the current child welfare funding models incentivize apprehending our children rather than focusing on prevention and family support services. In evidence, Cora Morgan referred to funding models that are dependent on the number of children in care as the “commodification of children”\(^{176}\). Another witness, Dr. Turpel Lafond described funding models that promote apprehension instead of prevention approaches as discriminatory.\(^{177}\)

78. A funding model that incentivizes apprehension over prevention is unacceptable. Instead, child and family welfare programs must focus their efforts and resources on prevention and invest in supporting families.\(^{178}\)

79. Three predominant issues lead to the apprehension of children: poverty, addictions and violence. First, children should never be removed from their families for reasons associated with poverty. Second, well-funded prevention and family support services relating to addictions have potential to intervene and keep families together. The role of kinship and culture is overlooked in the current system. Providing support to a mother is also providing support to a child.\(^{180}\) Unfortunately, there is not enough funding for prevention services like parenting programs or supports to address poverty, addictions and violence, this lack of supports inhibits a shift towards preventative care and preventative child welfare.\(^{181}\)


A holistic approach is needed to support the child and their family. A holistic approach addresses the needs of the family as a whole as well as the individual needs of the child. It involves physical needs such as shelter and food as well as health needs such as medical treatment to address physical, emotional and mental health. This type of approach is essential to maintaining the family unit and to allow the child to thrive. For example, traditional parenting programs and creating opportunities for early learning for the Indigenous children and healing for their families.

Healing at a community level would be best addressed by providing our communities with the funds to design and implement our own approaches to healing. Every Indigenous community is different and has its own unique ways of offering healing; however, resources are needed. However, generally resources and funding are needed provided to the family for education, employment, training, traditional parenting, and for children to access and participates in sports, recreation, dance and crafts.

To successfully implement a holistic approach to child welfare, Indigenous communities must have the jurisdiction to design, implement, and control child and family welfare services in their communities that are equitably funded (see recommendation 8), as we are in the best position to identify the needs of our members.

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SEXUAL EXPLOITATION and HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“[T]his is not just a big city issue. This is happening everywhere.”188 – OPP Inspector Tina Chalk 83. Sexual exploitation and human trafficking is happening in our communities. We are concerned that the police and service providers in our communities are not adequately equipped to identify and respond to incidents of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. We are also concerned that our community members, particularly youth, are not aware of this issue and what resources and supports are available to individuals experiencing this sexual violence.

15) RECOMMENDATION:

All Police Services should have ample funding to provide specialized training and officer capacity dedicated to addressing human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Sub-Recommendations:

- All officers must receive training on identifying victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- This training should include the Indigenous-specific dimensions of human trafficking and exploitation.
- Indigenous communities should receive resources to work with police services serving their community to develop and design community-specific training on the dynamics of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in their community.
- Service providers also need training and education to identify and respond to human trafficking (e.g. medical first responders, child and family service workers, educators, the service industry (i.e. hotel and cleaning staff)).

84. Overall, many police officers do not have the awareness, education, and training to effectively respond to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. At this point, many police officers are not aware that human trafficking is occurring everywhere – not just in city centres.189 When police do not understand the complexities of trafficking and exploitation, they may misunderstand victims and fail to identify that someone is actually in a human trafficking/exploitive situation.190

85. To increase police awareness and understanding of trafficking and exploitation, all police officers should receive training on identifying victims of human trafficking to identify these cases early, for example during routine traffic stops. In evidence, OPP Inspector Tina Chalk agreed more training would benefit officer understanding and awareness.

86. She elaborated on the type of education needed and explained there is a need for ongoing training focusing on Indigenous-specific dimensions of human trafficking and exploitation:

“... police services [should] introduce or enhance training on the dynamics of human trafficking. This training should include the Indigenous-specific dimensions of human trafficking, including the factors that make Indigenous women and girls more vulnerable to violence. The training should be delivered to recruits, specialists and frontline officers, and be regularly reinforced through ongoing communications.”

87. This Indigenous-specific training content for police services on human trafficking and sexual exploitation should be designed in consultation with Indigenous communities to ensure the factors making Indigenous women and girls more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation are understood and incorporated in the training. Further, this training should also be included in annual block training to reach more seasoned officers.

88. Finally, further police training is needed to orient officers to the dynamics of trafficking and exploitation occurring in each distinct Indigenous community the officers serve.

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community-specific component is especially helpful for officers because it helps them empathize and understand in a way that empowers them to provide more effective services for Indigenous victims and survivors of trafficking and exploitation.  

89. Ultimately, funding is needed for all of the above training to ensure police services can meaningfully respond to Indigenous women and girls who are trafficked and sexually exploited.  

90. Training and awareness about human trafficking is needed beyond the police. Trafficking is often “hidden but in plain sight” and is happening in places where police generally are not invited, such as motels and vacation rentals. Therefore, many other service providers and industries, particularly the service industry, may regularly come into contact with human trafficking and sexual exploitation but are unaware.  

91. To ensure service providers are able to recognize and respond to possible incidents of human trafficking it is recommended that these service providers receive education on identifying and responding to possible human trafficking and sexual exploitation incidents. Service providers are individuals who may be coming into direct contact with an Indigenous woman or girl who is in an exploitive situation, including medical first responders, child and family service workers, educators, and the service industry (e.g. hotel and cleaning staff).  

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16) **RECOMMENDATION:**
Indigenous communities must receive funding and resources to design, implement, and provide education and awareness to all community members, especially youth, on what sexual exploitation and human trafficking is, what to do when you or someone else is being exploited and or trafficked, and the resources available to support victims.

92. Awareness about sexual exploitation and human trafficking is not only low for the police, but also for communities and for victims. Our communities need resources to develop community-specific education and awareness on human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Our community members need to recognize it (for themselves and others) and know how to effectively respond and support women and girls who are or have been involved.

93. There are women and girls in our communities who are particularly at risk for exploitation due to one or a combination of the following: poverty, addictions, mental health issues, racism, and/or simply traveling outside of the community to an urban area. The internet is also a huge risk factor for children and youth in our communities. The internet makes it very easy for traffickers to target and lure children and youth online – even in very isolated communities.

94. Consequently, increasing awareness and education at the community level is an important part of the response to human trafficking. Indigenous communities should receive resources to develop and implement education and awareness programs to teach our youth about sexual exploitation and human trafficking. For example, there are many women in exploitive situations...

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who do not realize it – education plays an important role in recognizing this. This education and awareness is one of the first steps needed to address human trafficking and sexual exploitation and was supported by Diane Redsky, the Executive Director of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. She explained that awareness is critically important and that things cannot change without it.

17) RECOMMENDATION:

Indigenous communities must receive sustainable funding to build and operate safehouses/shelters/safe spaces in the community for individuals and their families experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence.

95. Human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of sexual violence are happening in our communities. However, many of our communities have little to no access to shelters, safehouses or safe spaces for women and girls to go to when required. Without a safe space, a woman or girl may have nowhere else to go other than remain in her exploitive situation. Safe spaces are needed for women experiencing exploitation and violence.

Therefore, there is an important role for having a safe house/space that is open 24/7 for a woman or girl to exit her situation and seek support when she has a window of opportunity. This recommendation was supported by Detective Constable Alana Morrison.

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96. A safe space in our communities is not the ‘be all end all’ solution to addressing the victimization and violence our women and girls are experiencing. However, it is a necessary starting point that would make a meaningful difference on the ground in our communities. Sustainable, discretionary funding that ensures we can operate a safe space for women and girls according to our community customs and values is key. There should be sustained funding and resources to Indigenous communities to establish these safehouses or shelters and the community should be consulted on the design of these shelters/safehouses because what is appropriate and required will be dependent on the community itself. The development of these shelters/safehouses is an opportunity to connect and provide the support and care women and girls are seeking – an opportunity to change lives.

97. However, the bigger picture to address victimization and violence towards Indigenous women and girls is addressing some of the larger systemic factors such as poverty, inadequate housing, lack of services and supports, addressing historical inter-generational trauma, and building on our communities’ strong cultures and Indigenous ways of being.

Conclusion

98. The National Inquiry is an important step in revealing and addressing the ongoing systemic harms the colonization of Canada continues to have on Indigenous people, especially women and girls. The truths heard from survivors, families, institutional and expert witnesses have made this very clear. Canada must accept these truths, honour its Treaty relationships, and take immediate and accountable action. Inaction is not an option.

99. Canada must support our communities in in implementing the systems, services and infrastructure that we require. There is a dire need for sustainable funding to ensure that our members have access to the services and infrastructure already available to non-Indigenous Canadians.

100. Our communities are strong, and our communities are resilient. Many of our recommendations require immense institutional change from the Canadian government. This

change is needed to recognize and support our right to self-determine and implement what is best for our communities.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 14th day of December 2018.
Schedule “A”

Summary of Recommendation

POLICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RECOMMENDATION (1)

(a) Canada must end all inequalities in federal services provided to Indigenous peoples (education, health, water, child welfare, etc.) and (b) Canada must provide ample and sustained discretionary funding to Indigenous communities to ensure access to safe and non-overcrowded housing.

Sub-Recommendations:

a. A major funding injection is required to address housing shortages, housing repairs, and housing-related infrastructure deficits (sewer and water services and access to potable water at home).
b. Ample and sustained funding is needed for housing and related sewer and water infrastructure.
c. A new funding model is required that ensures Indigenous communities have discretion and control over how funding used to address community priorities.

RECOMMENDATION (2)

Police must receive training on the unique cultural, social, economic and historical realities of the First Nation Communities that they Serve.

Sub-Recommendations:

a. Cultural competency training and education must be mandatory not only for new recruits, but also for established officers as a part of ongoing and yearly block training.
b. Ample and sustained funding must be provided to First Nations to develop and provide cultural competency and community orientation training for police officers.
c. Officers must participate in mandatory community orientations that are developed, designed, and provided by the community in which they are serving.
d. Police services must develop policies to ensure new officers, and any officer transferred to a new community, shadow officers who have experience working in the community and who are ideally from that community.

**RECOMMENDATION (3)**

**Police services must work with Indigenous communities to develop communication policies with communities they serve and with families with regarding investigations.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

a. Indigenous communities should receive funding to establish and train a community-police liaison position to facilitate community-police relationships and communication.

b. Police services should implement mechanisms with Indigenous communities and families (e.g. a mutually agreed upon written protocol) that ensures how and when information will be shared regarding an investigation.

**RECOMMENDATION (4)**

**Police Services should develop programs in consultation with Indigenous communities that support creating positive and lasting relationships with the community they serve.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

a. Sustained and ample funding should be offered for programs, such as Project Journey, that aim to foster positive relationships between Indigenous youth and the police while also providing educational, cultural, and work/experiential opportunities for youth.

b. Funding should be provided to Indigenous communities to develop community-based programs and events that support building positive relationships between community members and the police.

**RECOMMENDATION (5)**

**Police Services must prioritize recruiting and training Indigenous officers, especially female officers.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

a. Police Services should establish mentorship programs to facilitate recruiting and enrolling more Indigenous people, especially females, into police training programs.
b. Every community should have an officer dedicated to liaising with youth, attending community events, providing informational sessions and assisting community members with applying to the police service.

c. Police Services and Police Colleges should hold information sessions in Indigenous communities. Where impossible, funding should be provided to allow participants to travel from their community to the required locations.

**RECOMMENDATION (6)**

**Police Services must create culturally appropriate, safe, and accessible ways for Indigenous people, especially women, to report crime and to report police misconduct.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

a. The complainant should have a mechanism to track their complaint.
b. Reporting mechanisms must not risk the complainant’s safety or privacy.
c. Indigenous communities should receive ample and sustained funding to operate a safehouse/shelter that serves as a safe space for women and their children (lack of safe spaces is a barrier to reporting crime).
d. In consultation with Indigenous communities, Police Services should develop third party and other reporting approaches to increase reporting and victim safety.
e. Reporting mechanisms should be available in Indigenous languages.

**RECOMMENDATION (7)**

**Police Services with overlapping jurisdiction must develop protocols to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear for responding to and investigating incidents involving missing and murdered Indigenous women.**

**Sub-Recommendations:**

a. Clear policies and agreements must be in place between all police services with overlapping jurisdiction that determine policies, procedures, and responsibilities for responding to missing person and homicide incidents where more than one police service is involved.
b. There must be measure of accountability built in to these policies and procedures to ensure that a failure to abide has repercussions.
c. Police Services in our communities should have an officer delegated to liaising with other police services who may have overlapping jurisdiction.
RECOMMENDATION (8)

First Nation Police Services must receive equitable funding and resources

Sub-Recommendations:

a. First Nation Police Services such as the Treaty #3 Police Service and NAPS must have access to the same funding, resources, support, training, and equipment as other Ontario Police Services.

b. First Nation Police Services should receive ample and sustainable funding to ensure they are able to have specialized police units.

c. First Nation Police Services such as NAPS and the Treaty #3 Police Services should receive ample resources to ensure access to the PowerCase program.
THE FAMILY

RECOMMENDATION (9)

Indigenous communities must have the jurisdiction to design, implement, and control child and family welfare services in their communities that are equitably funded.

Sub-Recommendations:

a. A new approach for funding and providing child and family welfare services is needed that recognizes Indigenous jurisdiction for child and family welfare – an approach that ensures Indigenous communities have the option to assume control over providing child and family welfare services in their communities in accordance with community customs, practices, and traditions.

b. Children who require care should not be removed from their community.

c. Funding for child and family welfare services must not connect to the number of children in care.

RECOMMENDATION (10)

Professionals and foster families must receive training to understand the unique historical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances of the communities they serve.

Sub-Recommendations:

a. Indigenous communities should receive ample and sustained resources to develop and provide this training to all professionals and foster families serving their community.

b. All professionals involved in providing child and family welfare related services to Indigenous communities must receive this training (e.g. child and family service agency staff, doctors, nurses, counsellors, etc.)

RECOMMENDATION (11)

Funding is needed to establish independent Indigenous child and family advocate positions to support families and children with understanding and navigating the child welfare system.
Sub-Recommendations:

a. Create independent advocacy positions to assist families with navigating the child welfare system.
b. Create independent advocacy positions to assist children who are in care with ensuring they get the best care possible
c. Advocates, with consent, must have the ability to access child/family information to support children and their families.

RECOMMENDATION (12)

Indigenous children in care outside of their home-community must remain connected to their community and culture.

Sub-Recommendations:

a. Indigenous communities must receive resources to foster and promote culture and positive cultural identities.
b. Child and family welfare agencies must create and implement plans to ensure children remain connected to their home-community and culture.
c. Child and family welfare agencies must receive funding specific to ensuring children in care are able to visit and participate in community activities and events.

RECOMMENDATION (13)

Supportive transitional programs are needed to assist youth leaving the child and family service system/aging out of care

RECOMMENDATION (14)

Child and family welfare programs must focus on holistic family support and prevention (not protection/apprehension)

Sub-Recommendations:

a. Parents must receive support and resources to help keep families together (e.g. parenting classes, cultural support, life skills, educational services, child care, income support, etc.).
b. See Recommendation 8 - Indigenous communities must have the jurisdiction to design, implement, and control child and family welfare services in their communities that are equitably funded.
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

RECOMMENDATION (15)

All Police Services should have ample funding to provide specialized training and officer capacity dedicated to addressing human trafficking and sexual exploitation

Sub-Recommendations:

a. All officers must receive training on identifying victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

b. This training should include the Indigenous-specific dimensions of human trafficking and exploitation.

c. Indigenous communities should receive resources to work with police services serving their community to develop and design community-specific training on the dynamics of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in their community.

d. Service providers also need training and education to identify and respond to human trafficking (e.g. medical first responders, child and family service workers, educators, the service industry (i.e. hotel and cleaning staff)).

RECOMMENDATION (16)

Indigenous communities must receive funding and resources to design, implement, and provide education and awareness to all community members, especially youth, on what sexual exploitation and human trafficking is, what to do when you or someone else is being exploited and or trafficked, and the resources available to support victims.

RECOMMENDATION (17)

Indigenous communities must receive sustainable funding to build and operate safehouses/shelters/safe spaces in the community for individuals and their families experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence.
Animakee Wa Zhing #37

Animakee Wa Zhing #37 is an Anishinabe community located in Treaty 3 territory on Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario. Our First Nation has approximately 300 members and consists of two separate reserve communities located roughly 105 kilometers apart by water: Windigo Island and Regina Bay. Because of the distance between our two reserve communities, the concerns faced by our two communities can be quite distinct. Windigo Island is located close to the United States boarder and is only accessible by ice road or water, while Regina Bay is located just off of Highway 71 with Kenora, the nearest city, approximately an hour drive from the community.

Policing in our community is particularly inadequate, too few officers spread over too large of a geographic area results in delays in police response time and investigation quality. Many of our members are not confident in the police and their ability to serve our communities appropriately.

Additionally, it is important to us that education and awareness is improved at the community level. With the rise of social media, including gaming systems with online chat features, our children and youth are particularly vulnerable and often are not always aware they are being targeted. We would like to see everyone in our communities educated on what constitutes human trafficking and sexual exploitation as well as how to protect themselves.

Eagle Lake First Nation

Eagle Lake First Nation is a proud Anishinabe First Nation located in Treaty 3 Territory on Eagle Lake in northwestern Ontario. Our First Nation has a registered membership of 615 people. The nearest city is Dryden, which is approximately 17km from the community.
Our community has focused on women’s issues and how they relate to missing and murdered Indigenous women. We actively achieve this through discussion groups and presentations by speakers invited to discuss issues affecting Indigenous women from a traditional perspective. We strongly believe that the perspectives raised by our community members are essential to improving the health and safety of our girls, women, and community as a whole.

**Grassy Narrows First Nation**

Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation) is an Anishinabe Nation located in Treaty 3 territory in northwestern Ontario. Our Nation has a approximately 1,500 members. We are located about an hour north of Kenora by road. Women and girls in our community have been face victimization and violence caused by systemic issues that are at present within our community – issues that are fueled by underlying social, economic, institutional and historical causes, such as the ongoing mercury contamination of our traditional territory.

We are concerned about increasing awareness and education in our community to ensure our members are aware of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Many individuals are not aware that they are being taken advantage of and are in great danger.

Additionally, police services generally lack the cultural sensitivity and understanding of Treaty rights required to properly address the needs of our members. All officers should undergo community orientations to ensure they understand our unique policing needs, our community customs and to build relationships with our members. Officers need to make a serious effort to introduce themselves to the various groups and members in our community.

**Obashkaandagaang First Nation**

Obashkaandagaang First Nation is an Anishinabe First Nation located in Treaty 3 territory on Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario. Our First Nation has 330 members.
Kenora is located only 15 minutes away. Our proximity to a non-Indigenous urban center results in our members being particularly vulnerable to the dangers associated with this urban centre.

We are exceedingly concerned about our children and youth. Often, they are forcibly removed from our community and neither their families nor our community are consulted on the placement of our children. Frequently, there are family members who are willing and able to take in the children; however, child welfare workers are restricted in considering the unique circumstances of our community. Further, these professionals continue to conduct themselves in a manner that is inconsistent with the best interests of the child. There needs to be more transparency, oversight and accountability built into the system to ensure that our children receive the best care possible.

**Ojibway Nation of Saugeen**

The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen is a proud First Nation that was established only in 1985 and received its reserve lands in 1990. The First Nation is located approximately 20 kilometers east of Savant Lake. The nearest significant service centre is Sioux Lookout, approximately 75 kilometers to the southwest. The land base consists of 5,986 hectares. The current population is approximately

Specifically, it is essential that it be understood that many of the members of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen travel to and often reside in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Sioux Lookout, Kenora and Dryden, and that there are systemic issues of racism in these communities, and they have a direct impact on our members, whether they are residing in those communities or visiting. Fortunately, some of these attitudes and responses are becoming public, most recently, for example, Inquiry headed by Senator Murray Sinclair which has just released its report into the Thunder Bay Police Services Board and has recommended that an administrator temporarily take over the existing board in order that they may have proper training respecting Indigenous cultural awareness, as well as to address issues regarding racism and profiling.

Because we are located approximately 450 kilometers northwest of Thunder Bay, many of our First Nation members are directly impacted by the absence of adequate resources to address racist views, and we urge that all of the recommendations be implemented as quickly as possible in order to come to terms with this reality.