

Government of the Northwest Territories

Introduction

The Government of the Northwest Territories' Action Plan includes a commitment statement from Cabinet and the Premier to work towards addressing the effects of colonialism and racial and gender discrimination at all levels of government and public institutions. This is important as this illustrates that the Action Plan is supported by all of Cabinet but more importantly this demonstrates accountability.

Progress and Key Highlights from June 2022 – 2023

The Government of the Northwest Territories worked with departments to develop a Draft Action Plan in response to the Calls for Justice presented in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This Draft Action Plan was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on December 8, 2021 and included a community engagement and consultation plan. The Draft Action Plan was mailed to every Indigenous and local government office along with a cover letter advising that the Gender Equity Division would be undertaking community engagement to get feedback on the Draft Action Plan.

Prior to undertaking community engagement, the Gender Equity Division in the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs collaborated with the Native Women's Association of the NWT to co-host an Indigenous languages terminology workshop. The workshop, which was held in Yellowknife May 31 – June 2, 2022, involved Indigenous language interpreter/translators (including Indigenous language interpreters from Stanton Territorial Hospital), Elders, and other resource people. Approximately 130 terms were developed in five Dene languages along with Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut. The result of this workshop will be a terminology booklet that will be produced and distributed by early summer 2023.

A media briefing was arranged at the conclusion of the workshop. The media briefing was provided by the participants and received good coverage, both territorially and nationally. Feedback received was very positive and a number of recommendations were made by the workshop participants including a request to hold a follow up workshop and for all departments to consider holding similar workshops.

The Gender Equity Division began community engagement on the draft MMIWG Action Plan on June 28, 2022 and visited a number of communities and held Open Houses. Where requested, briefings were also provided to local and Indigenous governments and to other stakeholders. The

Native Women's Association of the NWT was invited to participate in these community visits and assisted by providing mental health support and language services. In total, 12 communities were visited, and a number of presentations and briefings were provided. It is important to note that the Gender Equity Division did not go into a community unless approved by local leadership. Where operations permitted, visits were also arranged to local community programs.

A [What We Heard](#) report was prepared on the results of the community engagement. The report noted that no specific changes were recommended on the Draft Action Plan during the community engagement. The report identified that some of these concerns may already be addressed through a proposed action and that there would be other opportunities and activities to address those concerns such as through the Family Violence Strategy that the Gender Equity Division is developing and through the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' Action Plan in response to the Calls for Justice was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 2, 2022. The Action Plan entitled ["Changing the Relationship"](#) includes 94 actions under the following headings: Culture, Health and Wellness, Justice and Human Security. The focus of the Action Plan is meant to change attitudes and behaviors including those of service providers. This is a three year plan and a report on its implementation will be provided annually.

Priorities June 2023 – 2024

- The Gender Equity Division is currently working on establishing an MMIWG Advisory Committee (Action #33). This committee will provide advice and guidance to the Government of the Northwest Territories' departments on work related to MMIWG.
- The Gender Equity Division is working with the Community Contacts to develop a draft Terms of Reference. The intent is to have this Advisory Committee in place by the fall of 2023.
- The 2022-2023 annual report is currently being prepared and will be posted on the Government of the Northwest Territories' MMIWG webpage on or around June 3rd.

Linkages to National Action Plan Priorities and Calls For Justice

The Family Information Liaison Unit was transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs effective April 1, 2022. The Family Information Liaison Unit program is part of a nationally funded program helping families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls find information and receive support for missing loved ones.

Closing Statement

The Government of the Northwest Territories appreciates the support provided by the Indigenous and local governments, key stakeholders, and other partners and the communities for their help with this important work.

Reports and Publications

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs launched a [MMIWG website](#) which provides an overview of the Government of the Northwest Territories' participation in, and response to the National Inquiry. It also includes links to all related documents including the Government of the Northwest Territories Action Plan and provides contact information for support services such as the Family Information Liaison Unit.