



# DOING OUR PART

*Initial Response to 'Reclaiming Power And Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women And Girls'*

**August 2019**

# FAIRE NOTRE PART

*RÉPONSE INITIALE À RÉCLAMER NOTRE POUVOIR ET NOTRE PLACE : LE RAPPORT FINAL DE L'ENQUÊTE NATIONALE SUR LES FEMMES ET LES FILLES AUTOCHTONES DISPARUES ET ASSASSINÉES*

**août 2019**

Le mot de la ministre et l'introduction ont été traduits de l'anglais.



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

*The Honourable Caroline  
Cochrane, Minister  
Responsible for the Status of  
Women*

The Government of the Northwest Territories acknowledges and appreciates the enormous amount of time and effort put into the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The subject matter itself created challenges that went far beyond simply collecting stories and evidence. The heartbreaking stories courageously shared by survivors and family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls surely tested the well-being of the Commission and those tasked with supporting them in their role. The volume of the final report may seem daunting to review in its entirety but the amount of work required to address this very sad and painful part of our society somehow diminishes that significantly.

The GNWT is committed to working with all Northerners and with partners across Canada to begin to address systemic causes of violence, inequality and racism so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people can feel safe and empowered in our country and in our territory. Many of the Calls for Justice are directed at all governments but in some cases it also includes organizations. The Commission clearly saw a need to not only work together but also saw the importance and value of bringing together many perspectives. We know that one approach will not work for everyone and that each of the Calls for Justice does not apply equally to everyone. In our initial response to the Calls for Justice, we have chosen to highlight what we are doing and indicating areas that we will need to explore further. We were also mindful of the fact that a new government is going to be in place after the upcoming territorial elections.

We also want to recognize the Native Women's Association of the NWT who worked tirelessly with the inquiry and the GNWT through the inquiry process. Their support was invaluable to the process and to the families involved. We publicly committed to supporting their recommendations for the NWT and are looking forward to working in partnership with them to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

The GNWT applauds the public commitment of Canada to develop the National Action Plan called for in the final report and looks forward to participating in those discussions and being part of an important national conversation that the Inquiry has begun.

Regardless of what you call it, violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people is not an individual problem or an issue only for certain communities. Many factors contribute to this violence including economic, social and political marginalization, as well as racism, discrimination and misogyny. According to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, colonialism played a key role in creating a societal structure that continues to perpetuate this type of behavior. In order to reverse this trend, we must as a whole, say that this is not acceptable and take steps to hold each other accountable. As a first step, I invite all residents in the NWT to review the Calls for Justice for All Canadians.

On a final note, I would like to thank and acknowledge those who offered their support and counseling to everyone involved in this Inquiry in one way or another. Having someone there to comfort and offer understanding makes a big difference to someone's healing journey. The care and kindness you showed is immeasurable.



## MOT DE LA MINISTRE

*L'honorable Caroline  
Cochrane, ministre  
responsable de la condition  
de la femme*

Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) a conscience et est reconnaissant des nombreuses heures de travail consacrées à l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées. Vu le sujet, il a fallu faire bien plus qu'écouter des témoignages et recueillir des preuves. Les histoires déchirantes qu'ont courageusement racontées les survivantes et les proches des femmes et des filles autochtones disparues ou assassinées ont certainement mis à l'épreuve le bien-être des commissaires et des personnes chargées de les épauler. Si, de prime abord, on pourrait être découragé de lire entièrement un rapport aussi colossal, l'ampleur du travail nécessaire pour panser ce chapitre triste et douloureux de notre histoire nous donne l'élan qu'il faut.

Le GTNO est résolu à travailler avec les Ténoises et Ténois et avec des partenaires de l'ensemble du Canada pour s'attaquer aux causes systémiques de la violence, de l'inégalité et du racisme, de sorte que les femmes, les filles et les personnes BLGBTQQIA autochtones se sentent en sécurité et en confiance dans notre pays et dans notre territoire. Bon nombre des appels à la justice s'adressent à l'ensemble des gouvernements, mais dans certains cas, ils concernent aussi des organismes. La Commission a clairement discerné un besoin de collaboration, mais a aussi constaté l'importance et la pertinence de rassembler plusieurs points de vue. Nous savons qu'il n'y a pas de stratégie universelle et que chaque appel à la justice ne s'applique pas à tous de la même manière. Dans notre réponse initiale à ces appels, nous avons choisi de rendre compte de ce que nous faisons et de faire ressortir les secteurs à explorer plus en profondeur. Nous avons aussi gardé en tête qu'un nouveau gouvernement sera au pouvoir après l'élection territoriale.

Nous tenons à remercier l'Association des femmes autochtones des TNO pour sa collaboration sans faille avec le GTNO et les commissaires lors de l'enquête. Son soutien a été inestimable dans le cadre de cette enquête et pour les familles touchées. Nous nous sommes engagés publiquement à appuyer ses recommandations pour les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, et il nous tarde de travailler avec elle à la résolution des problèmes de violence envers les femmes, les filles et les personnes BLGBTQQIA autochtones.

Le GTNO se réjouit que le gouvernement du Canada se soit engagé publiquement à élaborer un plan d'action national suivant la recommandation du rapport final et est impatient de participer aux discussions à ce sujet de même qu'à l'important dialogue national découlant de l'Enquête.

Quel que soit le nom qu'on lui donne, la violence envers les femmes, les filles et les personnes BLGBTQQIA autochtones n'est pas un problème isolé ou propre à seulement certaines collectivités. De nombreux facteurs l'alimentent, comme la marginalisation économique, sociale et politique, le racisme, la discrimination et la misogynie. Selon le rapport final de l'Enquête, le colonialisme est à l'origine d'une structure sociétale qui garde vivant ce type de comportement. Pour renverser la tendance, il faut, en tant que société, déclarer que c'est inacceptable et agir concrètement pour réparer nos torts. Pour commencer, j'invite les Ténoises et Ténois à lire les Appels à la justice visant l'ensemble de la population canadienne.

Enfin, j'aimerais remercier celles et ceux qui ont apporté soutien et conseil aux personnes ayant participé, de près ou de loin, à l'Enquête. Le réconfort et l'écoute favorisent grandement le processus de guérison. L'attention et la gentillesse dont vous avez fait preuve sont incommensurables.

# INTRODUCTION

Before anything else, thanks and recognition must be expressed to those from across the Northwest Territories and Canada who had the courage to bring their truths forward to support the Inquiry and insist on the need for all Canadians to hear, acknowledge and act upon. Whether sharing at the Truth Gathering Process at the National Inquiry events, in front of the two National Roundtables on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, in media interviews or marching in the streets, Indigenous people, family members, friends, and survivors of violence have been telling their stories for a very long time and are continuing to do so. It is devastating to lose a loved one and it takes a lot of courage and resilience to go back and relive the trauma experienced. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) will honour this courage and resilience, and do its part to help in the reclamation of power and place, by hearing and sharing those stories, and using the recommendations of this report to guide its work.

The GNWT was honoured to help host the first National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Ottawa, held in February 2015. Our government heard, understood, and supported the need for an Inquiry to move forward. Work began in some areas – increased profile of the status of Indigenous women and girls, further dialogue and discussion regarding the scope of what might be needed to address the crisis of violence and racism against Indigenous women and girls. In many ways, the National Inquiry has done a better job acknowledging the scope (for example recognizing 2SLGBTQQIA needs) and the depth of the issue than had been imagined possible back in 2015.

*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Reclaiming Power and Place)* is not an easy read, nor should it be. It suggests a breadth of actions that need to be taken by governments, and by Canadians, to address violence against Indigenous populations in our country, and particularly women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and the entrenched root causes of that violence.

There are many Calls for Justice within *Reclaiming Power and Place* which have significant implications for the Government of the Northwest Territories and residents. This document is an initial response to those Calls for Justice. Because of the timeframe available to this current government, the decision was made to undertake a preliminary review and provide an initial response. The GNWT recognizes that a more in-depth review and analysis of the final report will have to be done. In particular, there is the need for further engagement of Indigenous peoples, through existing and evolving relationships within the territory, to work together and respond in a way that reflects our unique population and landscape. But more importantly, it is essential to map out our respective roles in how we begin to address violence directed at our Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

When the inquiry began, the GNWT recognized that this would be an on-going project. This document is an initial commitment to continue working, to bring forward items for further discussion, and to keep paying attention to the stories and the Calls for Justice.

# INTRODUCTION

D'abord et avant tout, il convient de remercier les Ténoises et Ténois et les Canadiennes et Canadiens qui ont eu le courage d'exposer la vérité dans le cadre de l'Enquête et de faire valoir la nécessité pour la population d'entendre ces témoignages, d'en reconnaître la validité et d'agir en conséquence. Que ce soit en témoignant durant le processus de consignation de la vérité de l'Enquête nationale, aux deux tables rondes nationales sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées ou lors d'entrevues avec les médias, ou encore en manifestant dans les rues, les Autochtones, les proches des victimes et les femmes ayant survécu à la violence racontent leur histoire depuis très longtemps et continuent de le faire. La perte d'un être cher est extrêmement douloureuse, et il faut énormément de courage et de résilience pour revenir sur les événements et revivre ce traumatisme. Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) tient à honorer ce courage et cette résilience et à faire sa part pour aider les Autochtones à réclamer leur pouvoir et leur place en écoutant et en diffusant ces témoignages ainsi qu'en s'appuyant sur les recommandations du rapport pour orienter son travail.

Le GTNO a eu l'honneur de participer à l'animation de la première table ronde nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées, qui avait lieu à Ottawa en février 2015. Il a constaté le besoin de tenir une enquête et appuyé les efforts en ce sens. C'est alors qu'a commencé le travail dans certains domaines : augmentation de la visibilité des femmes et des filles autochtones, et intensification du dialogue et des discussions sur l'ampleur des mesures à prendre pour résoudre la crise de violence et de racisme envers ces dernières. À bien des égards, l'Enquête nationale a bien mieux cerné la portée (p. ex. reconnaissance des besoins des personnes BLGBTQQIA) et l'envergure du problème que ce qu'on avait imaginé possible en 2015.

*Réclamer notre pouvoir et notre place : le rapport final de l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées* n'est pas une lecture facile et ne devrait pas l'être. Y sont proposées diverses mesures que doivent prendre les

gouvernements, mais aussi la population canadienne, pour mettre fin à la violence envers les Autochtones de notre pays, en particulier les femmes, les filles et les personnes BLGBTQQIA. On y fait également état des causes profondes de cette violence.

*Réclamer notre pouvoir et notre place* contient beaucoup d'appels à la justice d'une grande incidence pour les résidents et le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest. À l'approche des élections, ce dernier a choisi de faire une lecture préliminaire du rapport et d'y donner une première réponse, qui figure dans le présent document. Le GTNO est conscient qu'une lecture et une analyse plus approfondies s'imposeront. Plus précisément, il sera essentiel d'inclure davantage les peuples autochtones en maintenant et en resserrant nos liens avec eux, pour travailler dans une optique de collaboration et formuler une réponse qui tienne compte de notre population et de notre contexte unique. Mais par-dessus tout, il faudra déterminer les rôles de chacun dans la lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes, aux filles et aux personnes BLGBTQQIA.

Dès le début de l'Enquête, le GTNO savait qu'il s'agissait d'un projet de longue haleine. Le présent document est la promesse qu'il poursuivra son travail, relancera la discussion sur certains sujets et continuera à prêter attention aux histoires et aux appels à la justice des peuples autochtones.

# INITIAL GNWT RESPONSE

There is a lot for a government to absorb and consider in *Reclaiming Power and Place*. There is content around genocide, which has fuelled a national conversation, and which raises questions for governments to consider more thoroughly, including those previously raised by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There is also discussion around the impacts of colonization and the resulting racism and discrimination that has played a key role in how Indigenous peoples have been viewed and treated. The Calls for Justice, however, remain the clear starting point, since they are often aimed directly at governments.

Rather than responding to each of the Calls for Justice, the GNWT has taken a thematic approach in this initial response. It is set out in two parts:

- The first is a list of the thematic sections of the Calls for Justice, highlighting where we are already doing the work or can build upon.
- The second sets out a number of high-level questions that will need to be considered more fully by our government.

The GNWT recognizes that this work cannot be done by governments alone. We need to work with the federal government, Indigenous governments, business sectors, and non-government organizations. Everyone will need to work together to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Based on experience, we know that how we work with our partners in responding to the Calls for Justice may require more in-depth discussions on how we collaborate and how we come to a consistent understanding of the issues involved. We have to be open to examining the Calls for Justice from various perspectives. Doing this will be reflective of the underpinnings of the final report.

# WHAT WE DO OR WILL DO RIGHT AWAY

## 1. Human and Indigenous Rights and Governmental Obligations

*Calls for Justice 1.1-1.11*

Many of the Calls for Justice under this theme area will require work with other governments to move forward. However, there are some areas where work is already initiated:

- The GNWT has received a request from the federal government to participate in the development of a National Action Plan, and is committed to working on this with federal, provincial, and territorial governments that also commit to this work.
- Supporting initiatives designed to increase the number of women running for elected office in the NWT is a mandate priority of the GNWT. This work has recently been boosted by funding from the federal government, and will continue.
- The GNWT has a Family Violence Campaign focused on shifting attitudes and beliefs. 140 workshops have been delivered since 2015, and eight videos have been viewed more than 7,000 times online. The GNWT supports, and will continue to support, the Native Women's Association of the NWT and the NWT Status of Women as they work to address the issue of family violence.

## 2. Culture

*Calls for Justice 2.1-2.7*

The GNWT is committed to acknowledging, recognizing, and protecting Indigenous cultures and languages, and is already implementing most of the culture-specific Calls for Justice, though some additional action is required to meet the recommendations:

- The GNWT has been very proactive in supporting the settlement of Indigenous claims and has been a strong partner in their implementation, which reflects a broader commitment to recognizing and respecting Indigenous rights.
- Nine Indigenous languages are recognized in the *Official Languages Act of the NWT*. The *Act's* structure is based on advice from communities. The GNWT continues to work with Indigenous communities and the federal government in funding and providing other support to revitalize, retain, and restore Indigenous languages within its jurisdiction. This includes the provision of interpreting services for government services, such as understanding clinical information within the health and social services system, and the courts, as required. Funding goes directly to Indigenous governments through the *Canada-NWT Agreement for Indigenous Languages in the NWT* to support community centred Indigenous language initiatives.

- The GNWT also uses the *Dene Kede* curriculum and *Innuqatigiit* curriculum in schools to ensure First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives are integrated. These curriculums were developed in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and Knowledge Keepers. Some schools also offer Indigenous language classes, using *Our Languages* curriculum.
- The GNWT runs and operates the NWT Archives, which collects and preserves audio recordings of language, traditional knowledge and oral history. The NWT Archives also provides advice to communities regarding their heritage information, including audio recordings. Currently, there are several projects underway which partners the NWT Archives and Indigenous governments and organizations to preserve archival material, traditional knowledge, and language.
- Through the *Traditional Knowledge Policy*, the GNWT recognizes the value and importance of incorporating traditional Indigenous knowledge into its programs and services. The GNWT also recognizes that it needs to work closely with Indigenous communities and holders of Indigenous knowledge in a respectful and collaborative manner in order to access that information. To this end, funding is provided for traditional knowledge projects annually. There is also funding for traditional knowledge in areas such as the management and monitoring of water, wildlife, and fish.
- The GNWT works as part of the NWT On-the-Land Collaborative to support on-the-land initiatives in the Northwest Territories. The Collaborative brings together government, charitable, corporate, and other partners to combine efforts and make it easier for communities to access money and other resources for on-the-land projects.
- Traditional knowledge is also incorporated in the delivery of health and social service programs and services, such as inclusion of traditional healing in health care, supporting research into traditional approaches to healing and wellness, midwifery, and custom adoptions. The GNWT understands that health and wellness is about more than physical health, and that this requires everyone to work together to provide the best care to all residents.

### 3. Health and Wellness

*(Calls for Justice 3.1 to 3.7)*

The GNWT is implementing most of the health- and wellness-specific Calls for Justice, though further action is required:

- The GNWT is in the process of finalizing standards of care that ensure community health programs and services are delivered in a culturally safe manner that respects culture, beliefs, values, religion, and language.
- *NWT Clinical Practice Guidelines* highlight the need for nurses to be aware of the realities of trauma and address the cycle of damaging effects. Trauma-informed care provides the

foundation for a basic understanding of the psychological, neurological, biological, social, and spiritual impacts that trauma and violence have on individuals.

- *NWT Sexual Assault Guidelines* were developed and adopted in 2019 to provide guidance to health care practitioners when providing care to survivors of sexual assault. The guidelines emphasize that sexual assault is a deeply traumatizing and subjective experience. It takes immense courage for a survivor of sexual assault to come forward and disclose their experience. It is the health professional's duty to honour the survivor's trust, treat them with dignity and respect, address their concerns, and to support them through their traumatic experience. This same expectation applies to all members of the responding trauma team.

#### 4. Human Security

*(Calls for Justice 4.1 to 4.8)*

The GNWT is engaged in a variety of work across government to address basic social and economic needs. The anti-poverty fund supports community organizations that support social and economic security. Ongoing work to ensure clean drinking water is available to all its residents will continue. Food security remains a focus, including encouraging local food production, traditional harvesting, and effective collaborative management of wildlife. Some of the Calls for Justice are addressed:

- The GNWT provides core funding for shelters for women and families fleeing violence and will continue to work with the shelters to address the trauma-related needs of those who access these services. The GNWT will also continue to participate in federal/provincial/territorial forums where safety of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people are discussed.
- *Healthy Foods for Learning* funding is provided to all schools to support healthy eating. This has far-reaching impact on children and their learning, and can change futures.
- The *Income Assistance Program* provides financial aid to assist with basic needs, food, accommodation and utilities.
- The *Senior Home Heating Subsidy* assists seniors with low to modest income with the costs associated with heating their homes and supports seniors to age in place.
- The *Disabled and Aged Allowance* helps clients obtain additional supports and services they may require as a result of age or disability.
- *Northern Distance Learning* is providing opportunities for learning in small communities that will improve outcomes and can change futures for students.
- The *Student Financial Assistance Program* assists eligible residents with the costs of obtaining a post-secondary education and supplements a student's own resources.

- The GNWT supports entrance and participation in the workforce:
  - The Small Communities Employment Strategy and the Small Community Employment Support Program supports employment in largely Indigenous NWT communities.
  - In addition, the *Canada-NWT Labour Market Agreements* support the labour market in providing employment and training programs.
  - The new high school *Pathways* program will expose students to a broad range of occupations and the educational pathway to obtain their selected path.

## 5. Justice

*(Calls for Justice 5.1 to 5.25)*

Many of the Calls for Justice that fall under the theme of Justice, will require further policy work, particularly with other governments. Work is being done, but there is also a need to identify further action and commitments before the Calls for Justice can be fully considered and met:

- Community Justice Committees support communities to develop alternatives to the criminal justice system, such as diversion programs, community service options, and crime prevention programs. Committees consist of community volunteers and a community justice coordinator. While the formal appointments of the committee members fall under legislation relating to youth offenders, committees in the NWT commonly facilitate diversion options for adults as well.
- Funding for crime prevention is available to all 33 communities in the NWT. The Department of Justice continues to work with those communities that have not accessed funding to address issues that may be barriers to the establishment of a committee. GNWT staff continue to engage with community leadership to explore ways to support crime prevention programs or initiatives in the communities. In the interim, support continues to be provided through the Yellowknife program, or in partnership with the committees based in nearby communities.
- The *NWT Victims Services Program* is a community-based service, delivered by community organizations, as opposed to public servants. The program is briefly referenced within *Reclaiming Power and Place*. The GNWT funds community-based victim services providers who offer victims of crime and tragedy person-centred emotional support, practical assistance, and referrals. It is based on the needs of the individual, and is not “incident specific”. The services provided are designed by individual communities to meet local needs. All NWT residents have access to the *Victim Services Program*, either in person or by phone.

## 6. Media and Social Influencers

(Call for Justice 6.1)

The GNWT supports all the Calls for Justice in this area, and supports them indirectly or directly through grants and scholarships across government, including NWT Arts Council grants as an example, as well as through plans such as the *Health and Social Services Cultural Safety Action Plan*.

## 7. Health and Wellness Service Providers

(Calls for Justice 7.1 to 7.9)

The GNWT supports all the Calls for Justice in this area, though further actions are required.

- In addition to on-the-land approaches highlighted earlier in this document, Community Wellness Plans, which are developed by each community, set out initiatives that are supported by the GNWT. The Community Wellness Plans are not only community based, they are also community centred, as called for in the Calls for Justice.
- The *NWT Midwifery Practice Framework* will provide the foundation for an expanded territorial midwifery program serving Indigenous communities. Midwives honour the Indigenous cultural roots and midwifery traditions of the communities they serve in the NWT, while respecting the cultural diversity of all clients. Midwives create space in which all clients can feel safe to express who they are, what they need, and how they wish to receive care.
- Midwifery care promotes, protects and supports human reproductive and sexual health rights, based on principles of justice, autonomy, equity and respect for human dignity for all clients, in particular those experiencing marginalization.
- The GNWT is committed to a competent public service that is representative of the people it serves. To achieve this, the GNWT established the *Affirmative Action Policy* that offers priority hiring to candidates belonging to eligible designated groups that are under-represented within the public service, including in the health care field. “Indigenous Aboriginal Persons” means people who are Dene, Inuit or Métis, indigenous to the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories, and includes any Aboriginal persons resident at birth, and any Canadian Aboriginal persons who have lived more than half of their life in the Northwest Territories.
- Recruitment and retention of Indigenous community members is a priority within health and social services, particularly child and family services. Recognizing that a healthy workforce is essential to the provision of effective programs and services, the GNWT provides access for all employees to an Employee Assistance Program that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Self-care is so important for those who are required to work with those experiencing trauma and violence.

## 8. Transportation Service Providers and the Hospitality Industry

*(Call for Justice 8.1)*

Based on an initial review, the GNWT is of the opinion that this Call for Justice is not within its jurisdiction, but supports it in principle and will share information about this Call with industry partners.

## 9. Police Services

*(Calls for Justice 9.1 to 9.11)*

Policing is provided by the RCMP through a Policing Services Agreement between the GNWT and the RCMP. The Minister of Justice establishes policing priorities for the RCMP each fiscal year, as contemplated in that agreement. In part because of this arrangement, most of the Calls for Justice in this area will require collaborative work including new actions and commitments, however, the initial review indicates that in most areas, work has at least been initiated.

- Trauma-informed practice and resilience training is provided, and at least 90 frontline staff have accessed that training since 2016.
- Each community in the NWT has an opportunity to influence policing practices specific to their needs through Policing Action Plans. These plans are jointly developed by the RCMP and community leadership. Priorities are developed based on the specific needs of each community, taking into consideration the available financial and human resources.
- All 33 communities have participated in setting policing priorities with the RCMP for the past four fiscal years. Policing priorities and plans are re-visited each year, and revised as deemed necessary by the respective community and the RCMP. This mechanism helps foster better relationships between community members and RCMP, which could encourage residents to report violence and seek assistance more often.
- RCMP policing activities are reported to community leadership and Department of Justice through monthly reports. Community leadership may choose to share these reports publicly or with other leaders, including Members of the Legislative Assembly. Working together enhances communication between partners and increases the level of commitment towards achieving local goals. Community governments benefit by being active partners and having a direct role in making their community a safer place to live.

## **10. Attorneys and Law Societies**

*(Call for Justice 10.1)*

The GNWT is generally supportive, though not directly responsible for all of the Calls for Justice in this area.

Cultural awareness training is provided to courtroom officers, staff, judiciary, and employees in the NWT judicial system.

## **11. Educators**

*(Calls for Justice 11.1 to 11.2)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at educators, though additional policy work and actions may be required:

- Since 2014, all educators in the NWT have had the opportunity to participate in the Residential School Awareness Training. Each August, the “New to the North” Teachers Conference provides new teachers to the NWT the opportunity to participate in this training.
- Educators who teach Northern Studies in NWT schools receive a different, more detailed in-service, to provide them with the knowledge required for their role in supporting Grade 10 students in learning about the history and legacy of residential schools.
- As an NWT-based institution, Aurora College has long recognized the importance of incorporating traditional knowledge and culture into both the curriculum and the operations of the College. The majority of students and learners are Indigenous; the College strives to be reflective of and acknowledge their experiences and histories. Wherever possible, Aurora College programs incorporate traditional knowledge, languages, and culture into classroom work and outcomes. On-the-land learning opportunities are part of several programs. Elders are regular guest presenters in classes, and are often consulted when developing relevant criteria and curriculum. In addition, campuses strive to include culture in events, activities, and ceremonies. Several courses, including Developmental Studies, English and Social Studies, as well as in Nursing, Education, and Social Work programs, include content about the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and violence against women and children.

## **12. Social Workers and Those Implicated in Child Welfare**

*(Calls for Justice 12.1 to 12.15)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at social workers and those implicated in Child Welfare, though additional action may be required. Many of the Calls for Justice are already

addressed through the NWT *Child and Family Services Act* and through self-government implementation.

### **13.Extractive and Development Industries**

*(Calls for Justice 13.1 to 13.5)*

The Calls for Justice in this area require further review and analysis, as well as further collaboration, prior to developing a response. Extractive and development industries play an important role in the overall economy of the NWT, as well as the economies of Indigenous communities. Indigenous governments and businesses are engaged in this work directly. It is essential that gender, equality and social impacts are carefully considered and addressed by governments and industry.

- The GNWT helps address concerns related to impact assessments during the planning (environmental assessment) phase of some resource development projects. The Impact Assessment Boards determine the scope of the assessment, which can include the well-being of potentially impacted people. As an example, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board included the requirement to consider the safety of women within the scope of assessment for the Tłı̄chq All Season Road. The Department of Lands facilitated discussions between the proponent (the GNWT's Department of Infrastructure) and an Indigenous government (Tłı̄chq Government) regarding the need for increased security for women. The result was agreed-upon language for a commitment by government developers that directly addressed the safety of women within a settlement region.
- For a resource development project where the GNWT is not a proponent, the GNWT can help facilitate the inclusion of information related to the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA people.
- The GNWT, as well as the Indigenous governments, have gained a lot of experience working with industry over the years. All parties recognize the importance of protecting the environment, and governments have collaboratively worked with industry to not only address environmental concerns, but also to take advantage of opportunities to address potential social impacts.

### **14.Correctional Service Canada**

*(Calls for Justice 14.1 to 14.13)*

These Calls for Justice is not within the jurisdiction of the GNWT but is supported in principle.

## **15.All Canadians**

*(Calls for Justice 15.1 to 15.8)*

The GNWT supports the Calls for Justice directed at all Canadians. The GNWT has already initiated work across departments to increase understanding of *Reclaiming Power and Place*. The GNWT will support National Action Plan activities that also help to increase awareness of all Canadians and work to address racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, misogyny, and transphobia.

## **16.Distinction-based calls – Inuit**

*(Calls for Justice 16.1 to 16.46)*

The GNWT will continue to work with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in these areas.

- The GNWT recruitment policy set out earlier in this document helps ensure there is Inuit representation within the public service.
- Community-based funding and programs referenced earlier in this report are available to fund Inuit-specific activities.

## **17.Distinction-based calls – Métis**

*(Calls for Justice 17.1 to 17.29)*

The GNWT will continue to work with Indigenous governments with responsibility for Métis in these areas.

- The GNWT recruitment policy set out earlier in this document helps ensure there is Métis representation within the public service.
- Community-based funding and programs referenced earlier in this report are available to fund Métis-specific activities.

## **18.2SLGBTQQIA**

*(Calls for Justice 18.1 to 18.32)*

The GNWT has done some work highlighted by these Calls for Justice:

- The GNWT is working to eliminate “either-or” gender options and include gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options – to date, this includes driver’s licensing and health care cards, as well as surveys collected by the NWT Bureau of Statistics.
- LGBTQ2S+ Inclusive Workplace Awareness Training is offered to all GNWT employees with support from the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife. The content of this half-day course is designed to provide GNWT employees with the necessary knowledge and tools to recognize key terms associated with the LGBTQ2S+ community, identify and apply

respectful behaviour and to support co-workers and clients within the LGBTQ2S+ community. By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

- 1) Gain a basic understanding of key terms within the LGBTQ2S+ community; identify the barriers and unique challenges that LGBTQ2S+ employees may experience in the workplace; and
- 2) Take action in creating and supporting a healthy, inclusive workplace.
  - Guidelines for ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Safety and Inclusion in NWT schools have recently been developed in partnership with the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife and will be implemented in all NWT schools in the 2019-20 school year.

# WHERE THERE IS MORE TO BE CONSIDERED

There are a number of areas where there is more to be considered by the GNWT, usually because significant further discussion and decision would be required so that a new commitment can be made by our government, in order to support specific Calls for Justice. For the consideration of NWT residents and leaders, key areas for further contemplation are set out below:

## **1. Accepting and Acting on Human Rights Instruments and Recommendations**

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories accepted in principle the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) over a decade ago, but interpretation of UNDRIP differs among governments and organizations. Other instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have already been agreed to by the federal government and include regular reporting from the GNWT. The interpretation of human rights instruments and recommendations overall should be carefully considered.

## **2. Engaging Indigenous governments and people, and considering distinction-based needs and approaches**

The GNWT approach, context, and history for ensuring Indigenous perspective exists in programs and services is different than the approach of most other provinces and territories. Indigenous people form a larger part of the public service than in most governments in southern Canada and a large majority of ministerial portfolio holders are often of Indigenous descent. Programs and services have been developed in an integrated way, not through a reserve-based system. Distinctions between Dene, Métis and Inuit services exist in some places – but the reality also is that fairly small communities also serve all three of these groups, as well as non-Indigenous populations. Ensuring services are culturally appropriate is essential. Offering completely different streams of service through the GNWT has not been contemplated, though in many cases within the Calls for Justice the areas of focus

would be covered by self-government agreements with Indigenous governments. Self-government is perhaps the ultimate way to ensure programs and services are distinction-based.

### **3. Improving Gender and Cultural Lenses**

Many of the Calls for Justice describe work that our government does, but without formalized consideration of gender, particularly the 2SLGBTQQIA lens, or sometimes without formalized consideration of both gender and Indigenous distinction. *Reclaiming Power and Place* has helped to initiate that discussion.

### **4. Resources and Challenges to Governing Small and Remote Populations**

The greatest challenge by far in responding to the Calls for Justice will be finding the resources and capacity to move them forward. This is particularly true for small and remote populations. Often the Calls for Justice ask for actions to be differentiated for Métis or Inuit populations, or for 2SLGBTQQIA populations. While this may be a reasonable solution in larger centres, the approach becomes more problematic in smaller communities. The GNWT already faces service delivery challenges. Finding innovative solutions that respect differences, although critical, represents another challenge.

Collecting statistics in areas with small populations can be difficult, particularly when balancing privacy with reporting results. This does not mean that this work and these distinctions are not important, but conversations about innovation, collaboration, and capacity are required to move towards the expectations worded in the Calls for Justice.

# CONCLUSION

The work of the Commissioners for the MMIWG Inquiry has resulted in a report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, and recommendations for governments, communities, and individuals.

The GNWT has agreed to participate in the discussions for the development of a National Action Plan called for in the Calls for Justice. The federal government issued this request, shortly after the final report was presented. This work will be important, not just in meeting the specific Calls for Justice, but also to help our government, and other governments and organizations in the NWT, to build capacity and understanding for how to better act on other Calls for Justice.

The GNWT hasn't yet committed to implement every relevant Call to Justice. Some require more analysis, as they likely require policy change or fiscal and human resources. These will be issues for discussion by the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. The precise actions to be implemented will be defined at a later date, when the next government is in place and the National Action Plan is agreed upon.

However, an initial review shows that there are far more Calls for Justice that we are already working towards than not, and in many cases, the stating of the Calls for Justice in *Reclaiming Power and Place* will result in shifts in the way the work is carried out.