

LEARNING FROM LOST LIVES

EXAMINING THE CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR POLICE
FROM THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING
AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

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VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Acknowledgements

The Vancouver Police Department proudly serves its community and acknowledges the City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

The Vancouver Police Department acknowledges that there are differing opinions on the appropriate use of terminology. For the purposes of this document, and in observance of the Federal Government's recognition of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis as Indigenous Peoples, we refer to these populations as Indigenous; this is also consistent with standard terminology used in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.ⁱ The term Aboriginal is used when referencing pre-existing organizations or materials.

Executive Summary

In September 2016, the Canadian Government initiated the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).ⁱⁱ The federal government and the 13 provincial and territorial governments mandated that this inquiry report on systemic causes of all forms of violence, which has contributed to violence and vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls. In addition, the Inquiry recommended institutional policies and practices be implemented in response to violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification and examination of practices that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing safety.

On June 3, 2019, the final findings from the National Inquiry into MMIWG were released to the public. The extensive review found that there are 231 steps, or Calls for Justice, that are required by all levels of government to end violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual) people. All Calls for Justice are aimed at tackling root causes of violence, and improving the safety, and thus lives, of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The MMIWG Inquiry identifies 28 Calls for Police Services, which are examined in this report. An additional six Calls for Justice, outside of those specific to police services, yet nonetheless important for police to review, are also addressed in this report.

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) accepts those voices heard by the Inquiry into MMIWG. Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people have the right to feel safe and be protected; their human rights must be upheld. The VPD concurs that Indigenous Peoples have rights to culture, health, security, and justice. The VPD acknowledges the courage of the survivors and families and recognizes that all police services, including the VPD, have a role to play in ending the violence, death, and unexplained disappearances of Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Canada has a disturbing history of systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples – the legal system, correctional institutions, government policies, and the police have administered policies and practices in ways that discriminate against women, Indigenous Peoples, and other racialized or marginalized groups. The VPD recognizes that this discrimination has led to substance use, poverty, homelessness, and overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

The National Inquiry into MMIWG outlines an imperative component to re-examine police practices that reduce the violence, death, and unexplained disappearances of Indigenous women and girls and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community. In response to the Calls for Justice in the National Inquiry into MMIWG, this document provides an overview of the following VPD practices and procedures:

- **Recruiting Practices:** This included a full review of VPD's recruiting practices as they relate to the Calls for Justice for Police Services. Covered in this section is the

VPD's Indigenous and gender diversity, specialized recruitment programming, and the process the VPD has in place for screening recruits for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias. In collaboration with VPD's Indigenous Advisory Committee, the VPD Training and Recruiting Section will undertake a review of their Indigenous outreach efforts and host information sessions with Indigenous communities in an effort to attract qualified candidates.

- **Mechanisms to Strengthen Community Relations:** The VPD has a dedicated Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Relations Section that provides outreach, develops partnerships, and maintains relationships with various communities and interest groups. Relationships are developed with communities at both the management and frontline levels. To address safety issues, members regularly meet with representatives from diverse communities to provide advice, suggestions, and recommendations. The VPD also has several full-time positions embedded in Indigenous communities and engaged in specific liaison initiatives. These positions collaborate with frontline organizations that work to heighten the safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

The VPD commits extensive resources to community partnerships, yet acknowledges that partnerships between police, Indigenous communities and 2SLGBTQQIA people need to be expanded. The VPD's responses to Calls for Justice regarding engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are discussed in this section. This includes the VPD's Indigenous Advisory Committee, comprised of recognized and respected members of Vancouver's Indigenous community and executive representation from the VPD.

- **Culturally Appropriate and Gender-Neutral Policy, Practices, and Procedures:** The VPD implements departmental policy with gender-neutral language. The VPD's policies, practices, and procedures are developed, and consistently reviewed, so they do not impact people differently based on any identifying factor such as gender. Furthermore, policy analysis is done beyond gender, and includes potential impacts on other identifying factors including age, sexual orientation, sexual expression, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. In developing policy and procedures, the VPD incorporates the principles of the *B.C. Human Rights Code*ⁱⁱⁱ and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.^{iv}
- **Cultural Competence Training and Trauma Informed Practices:** The VPD is committed to making all employees more culturally fluent. To that end, it provides a number of training initiatives to officers and civilians, including: VPD Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training; Circle of Understanding (through the Justice Institute of BC); Aboriginal First Nations Awareness Course; Indigenous Awareness for Special Municipal Constables; and Sex Work and Sex Workers Awareness Course. To educate police regarding 2SLGBTQQIA people and their experiences, and to address discrimination, the VPD offers training on gender frameworks and models,

contextualizing 2SLGBTQQIA history in Canada, and reflections on 2SLGBTQQIA lived experiences.

In addition, the VPD has recently implemented mandatory Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) training, a full day workshop delivered to frontline VPD officers. This important training illustrates how implicit biases may affect police perception and behaviour, and as a result negatively affect community members. Notably, the training provides specific focus to the effect of bias on Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, the VPD is sensitive to the fact that trauma has a neurobiological impact and for these reasons, sections of the VPD introduced trauma informed investigative practices in 2017. VPD's Sex Crimes and Domestic Violence Units continue to educate members on the impact of trauma since first introducing the concept in 2014. Currently, the VPD is working on expanding trauma informed practices to other sections.

- **Investigative Practices:** The VPD follows the same investigative process regardless of a victim's race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other identifying factor. Nevertheless, VPD investigators are keenly aware of the unique historical and cultural sensitivities surrounding Indigenous victims and consider those during investigations, both to provide resources for the victim and families, and to aid the investigation.

The VPD recognizes that receiving information about a missing and murdered loved one is vital to begin the healing journey; families need to receive timely information. VPD maintains communication with the family members if required and desired by the family, through Family Information Liaison Units and/or through assigned family liaison roles, as mandated by provincial standards.

Important to investigative success and to provide support for victims and families, VPD investigative sections collaborate with community partnerships. For example, the VPD's Special Investigations Section has developed a partnership with The Treehouse Vancouver Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, a collaborative initiative between the VPD and other stakeholders including but not limited to the Ministry of Justice, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society, and the Vancouver Regional Crown Counsel.

The VPD also supports the Calls for Justice that will necessitate a nationwide response. This includes support for provincial and territorial governments to establish a nationwide emergency number. Furthermore, if a national task force to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is established, the VPD will support it and commits to submitting all such cases to the task force.

The VPD recognizes that police have played a role in the historical trauma to Indigenous Peoples; some of the effects of this trauma have been lasting and passed across generations. Acknowledgement of both the history and trauma, as well as the current state, is important for a path forward. All police agencies, including the VPD, have an imperative role to ensure that systemic racism and discriminatory practices do not continue. In addition to the responsibility the criminal justice system has, the VPD understands why the National Inquiry into MMIWG has called for action from other sectors including educators, health and wellness service providers, social workers amongst others – there is a responsibility to act for all.

Developing a positive relationship between the VPD, Indigenous Peoples, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, will remain a priority. The VPD engages in ongoing initiatives with diverse communities, as described in this report. The VPD commits to working towards the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Far too many Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA lives have been taken - the VPD commits to *learning from lost lives*.

Reference Guide

The Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into MMIWG are consolidated and organized in this report within the thematic sections outlined below. The Calls for Justice below are condensed from the original form – please refer to Appendix A for the uncondensed list of Calls for Justice for Police Services and Appendix B for other Calls for Justice that this report addresses.

Acknowledgement		
Call for Justice		Page
9.1	Acknowledge that the historical and current relationship between Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people and the justice system has been largely defined by colonialism, racism, bias, discrimination and fundamental cultural and societal differences. Acknowledge that, going forward, this relationship must be based on respect and understanding, and must be led by, and in partnerships with, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.	17
Reviewing Recruiting Practices		
9.3 (i)	Achieve representative Indigenous and gender diversity through specialized recruitment;	23
9.3 (ii)	Indigenous language capacity;	25
9.3 (iii)	Screen recruits for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias; and	27
9.3 (iv)	Include Indigenous community in recruitment process.	28
Strengthening Community Relations		
9.2 (ii)	Engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and 2SLGBTQQIA people;	28
9.4 (ii)	Specialized Indigenous policing units to lead community liaison work, relationships building, and crime prevention within and for Indigenous communities;	28
9.7	Partner with front-line organizations that work in service delivery, safety, and harm reduction for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people to expand and strengthen police services delivery;	29
9.8	Establish and engage with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee;	32
9.5 (i)	Establish communication protocol with Indigenous communities to inform them	32,

	of policies, practices, and programs that make communities safe;	54
17.14	Police must establish better communication with Métis communities and populations through representative advisory boards; and	33
17.12	Build partnerships with Métis communities, organizations and people to ensure culturally safe access to police services.	36

Culturally Appropriate and Gender-Neutral Policy, Practices, and Procedures

9.2 (i)	Review and revise all policies, practices, and procedures to ensure culturally appropriate and bias free service delivery;	36
9.3 (vi)	Retain Indigenous officers through relevant employment supports, and offer incentives to Indigenous officers to meet their unique needs as Indigenous officers serving Indigenous communities, to ensure retention and overall health and wellness of the service;	38
9.3 (vii)	End the practice of limited-duration posts in all police services, and instead implement a policy regarding remote and rural communities focused on building and sustaining a relationship with the local community and cultures;	38
9.11	Develop and implement guidelines for the policing of the sex industry in consultation with women engaged in the sex industry, and create a specific complaints mechanism about police for those in the sex industry; and	40
18.14	Ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQQIA people in the sex industry.	40

Training: Increasing Cultural Competence & Ensuring Trauma Informed Practices

9.3 (v)	In training, include history of police in the oppression and genocide of Indigenous Peoples, anti-racism and anti-bias training and culture and language training;	40
9.2 (iv)	Train all staff on culturally appropriate and trauma-informed practices, especially when dealing with families if MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people;	41
17.13	Educate police about the unique history and needs of Métis communities; and	43
18.13	Educate police regarding 2SLGBTQQIA people and experiences to address discrimination, especially homophobia and transphobia, in policing.	46

Reviewing Investigative Practices		
18.12	Better investigate crimes against 2SLGBTQQIA people, and ensure accountability for investigations and handling of cases involving 2SLGBTQQIA people;	47
9.5 (iii)	Improve coordinating across government departments and between jurisdictions and Indigenous communities and police services;	49, 51
9.5 (vi)	Establish standardized response times to reports of missing Indigenous persons and women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people experiencing violence, and conduct a regular audit of response times to monitor and provide feedback for improvement.	51
9.5 (ii)	Improve communication between police and families of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people from first contact with police, with regular communication through investigation;	54
9.5 (i)	Establish communication protocol with Indigenous communities to inform them of polices, practices, programs;	32, 54
9.5 (iv)	Recognize and have protocols to mitigate impacts of high turnover among officers may negatively impact progress of an investigation and relationship with family members;	56
9.9	Establish a national task force to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people from across Canada;	57, 62
9.10	Submit all unresolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people to the national task force	57, 62
9.4 (i)	Specialized Indigenous policing units are to be staffed with Indigenous investigators, who will be the primary investigative teams and officers overseeing the investigation of cases involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people;	57
9.6	Establish an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples within their police service; and	58
9.2 (iii)	Ensure appropriate Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA representation on police boards and oversight bodies.	59

Inspiring Change: Future Directions for the VPD

9.5 (vii)	Lead the provincial and territorial governments to establish a nationwide emergency number;	62
9.9	Establish a national task force to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people from across Canada;	56, 62
9.10	Submit all unresolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people to the national task force	57, 62
9.5 (v)	Create a national strategy, through Canadian Association of Chief of police, to ensure consistency in reporting mechanisms; and	63
9.4 (iii)	Specialized Indigenous policing units, within non-Indigenous police services, are to be funded adequately by governments.	63

Introduction

Background

In September 2016, the Canadian Government initiated the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).^v The federal government and the 13 provincial and territorial governments mandated that this inquiry report on:

- Systemic causes of all forms of violence – including sexual violence – against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes contributing to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada; and
- Institutional policies and practices implemented in response to violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification and examination of practices that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing safety.

Family members and survivors of violence who wished to participate in the Inquiry could do so and share their testimony, as part of the Truth-Gathering Process. Other components of the Truth-Gathering Process included Institutional Hearings regarding the systemic causes of institutional violence and institutional responses. Expert and Knowledge Keeper hearings involved Elders, academics, legal experts, among others, who provided insight on systemic causes of violence and offered solutions. In addition, groups that represent non-government organizations, Indigenous women's groups, civil societies, and some police services participated in the Inquiry.

The MMIWG Inquiry encompassed the voices from:

- over 2,380 individuals who participated in the National Inquiry into MMIWG;
- 819 people created artistic expressions through the MMIWG Inquiry's Legacy Archive;
- almost 750 people shared by providing statements;
- a total of 486 family members and survivors shared their experiences and recommendations at 15 Community Hearings;
- over 270 family members and survivors shared their stories in 147 private, or in-camera, sessions; and
- another 84 Expert Witnesses, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, front-line workers, and officials provided testimony in nine Institutional and Expert and Knowledge Keeper Hearings.

VPD Participation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG

Recognizing the importance and in support of the National Inquiry into MMIWG, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) participated in the Inquiry by collaborating in working groups, attending meetings with the City of Vancouver (CoV), and conducting a comprehensive file review, as described in the following sections. In addition, upon the release of the National Inquiry's Interim Report, the VPD prepared *Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges*, a report that informed VPD's submission to the National Inquiry.

Working Meeting to Support National Inquiry into MMIWG

On April 25, 2017, the CoV hosted a Working Group Meeting to support the National Inquiry into MMIWG. The goal of this meeting was to develop a support plan for the Inquiry. Over 50 participants attended the full-day event to better understand how families involved with the MMIWG Inquiry could be more fully supported in Vancouver. The VPD had several representatives participate in this meeting including a Deputy Chief Constable and police officers from the VPD Missing Persons Unit (MPU), the VPD Indigenous Liaison Officer, and the VPD Sex Industry Liaison Officer.

During facilitated group discussions, participants were asked through a visioning process to reflect upon what families might need throughout the MMIWG Inquiry in Vancouver. The event included facilitated discussions, group discussions using a strengths-based approach to strategic planning, and dialogue around areas of need.

British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police MWCI Subcommittee

The VPD also supported the Inquiry by participating on a committee to ensure dialogue with other police departments. The British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police (BCACP) Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) special purpose committee was established to provide strategic advice on how to facilitate coordinated actions on MWCI police-related recommendations.^{vi} This committee, working on completing the MWCI recommendations, engaged as a subcommittee when the National Inquiry into MMIWG was announced. The subcommittee continues to meet and review information from the community and provincial government, and will incorporate the recommendations from the National Inquiry into MMIWG.

Review of MMIWG Cases

The VPD fulfilled all requests received from the National Inquiry into MMIWG. The VPD received four requests for information on 39 Indigenous women and files related to them ranging from 1983 to 2016. Some requests, believed to have originated from Vancouver, in fact did not. In support of the Inquiry, the VPD provided information on the original reporting agency and a synopsis of these files. The files that were VPD cases were located and disclosed to the National Inquiry.

As part of the VPD's submission for the National Inquiry into MMIWG, a file review process was completed in accordance with the Province of British Columbia (B.C.) Police Services guidelines. In addition, as part of VPD's commitment to the National Inquiry into MMIWG,

questions and data requests were tracked in accordance with national reporting standards. This process was adopted by municipal agencies in B.C.

Key Findings from the National Inquiry into MMIWG

On June 3, 2019, the final report for the National Inquiry into MMIWG was released to the public. The report found that there are 231 steps that are required by governments and Canadians, to end the genocide against Indigenous women and girls. These steps or “Calls for Justice” are imperative, and not optional, according to the Inquiry’s final report. Some Calls for Justice are directed at federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments, while others are directed at media, educators, correctional services, and police, among other sectors. Finally, the findings call on all Canadians to have a role in creating change.

An important element of the Inquiry was to identify how police practices can assist in reducing the violence, death, and unexplained disappearances of Indigenous women and girls along with members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community. The MMIWG Inquiry identifies 28 Calls for Police Services (see Appendix A for full list of all Calls for Police Services), which are examined in this report. An additional six Calls for Justice, outside of those specific to police services, yet nonetheless important for police to review, are also addressed in this report (see Appendix B).

In general, expressions in the review included but were not limited to:

- an overall lack of trust in police;
- fear of reporting crimes to the police;
- a desire for improved relationships between police services and Indigenous communities;
- increased Indigenous representation in police services;
- designated investigators, police units, protocols or regional offices to address violence against Indigenous women;
- a need to determine how best to protect Indigenous women involved in survival sex work;
- calls for improved cooperation between police departments;
- improved communication between the police and Indigenous families;
- greater awareness of 2SLGBTQQIA issues, including the history and culturally-specific solutions for 2SLGBTQQIA people;
- increased knowledge of Indigenous issues and distinctive realities, cultural competency and practical supports for Indigenous families;
- more immediate, proactive, and thorough investigations into the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people; and

- more responsive, transparent, and accountable policing (including comprehensive and independent police oversight).

Receiving Voices: The VPD’s Acknowledgement of the Findings

The VPD trusts the power of voices, and accepts those voices heard by the Inquiry into MMIWG. Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people have the right to feel safe and be protected; their human rights, like all individuals, must be upheld. Unfortunately, a truth not uncommon, violence permeates the lives of many of these individuals and many lives have been lost due to this violence. The VPD acknowledges the courage of the survivors and families and recognizes that all police services, including the VPD, have a role to play in ending the violence, death, and unexplained disappearances of Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Canada has a disturbing history of systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples – this has been extensively researched and documented. Historically, the legal system, correctional institutions, and the police have administered policies and practices in ways that discriminate against women, Indigenous Peoples, and other racialized or marginalized groups. When coupled with discriminatory government policies, the generational effects of colonization, displacement, and the Residential School system have disadvantaged and impoverished Indigenous Peoples. The VPD recognizes that this discrimination has led to substance use, poverty, homelessness, and overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system. We have a responsibility to acknowledge that as a society, we have failed Indigenous Peoples, and a responsibility to ensure that systemic racism and discriminatory practices do not continue.

Developing a positive relationship between the VPD and Indigenous Peoples will remain a priority. One strategic goal in the 2017-2021 VPD Strategic Plan is to *build relationships, understanding, and trust with diverse communities*.^{vii} Accordingly, the VPD engages in ongoing initiatives with Indigenous Peoples, as described in this report. However, in light of the findings in the National Inquiry into MMIWG, the VPD accepts that this work needs to be expanded and further solidified; the VPD will continue to listen and act to work towards safety for everyone, including all Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The VPD recognizes that building relationships must be based on respect and understanding, and led by and in partnerships with Indigenous communities and 2SLGBTQQIA people.¹

¹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.1: We call upon all police services and justice system actors to acknowledge that the historical and current relationship between Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people and the justice system has been largely defined by colonialism, racism, bias, discrimination, and fundamental cultural and societal differences. We further call upon all police services and justice system actors to acknowledge that, going forward, this relationship must be based on respect and understanding, and must be led by, and in partnerships with, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.*

IN LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS IN THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MMIWG...THE VPD WILL CONTINUE TO LISTEN AND ACT TO WORK TOWARDS SAFETY FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING ALL INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS AND 2SLGBTQQIA PEOPLE.

Embracing Diversity: The VPD's Community Engagement Philosophy

The VPD embraces Vancouver's blend of diverse cultural groups, ethnicities, and religions from all over the world, and Indigenous communities in Canada. The VPD ensures active engagement with the culturally diverse communities it serves; this engagement has been in place for many years and will continue. The VPD's Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Relations Section (DIIRS), established over 20 years ago, has an over-arching goal of building trust and confidence with Indigenous, and other vulnerable communities, in Vancouver.

DIIRS engages actively with the community, including participation in a variety of Indigenous community events. These events promote cultural awareness, safety, and help build trust in police. VPD members participate in these events and the VPD is often involved in organizing and/or assisting to secure funding. Examples include but are not limited to:

- The annual Women's Memorial March;
- The annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes;
- The annual Canoe Waking Ceremony;
- The annual Pulling Together Canoe Journey;
- The annual Tribal Journey;
- Orange Shirt Day;
- National Indigenous Peoples Day; and
- National Aboriginal Veterans Day.

In addition, to bridge gaps between police and the community, the VPD has established several full-time community liaison positions. These include the following full-time positions: an LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer, a Sex Industry Liaison Officer, a Homeless Outreach and Supportive Housing Coordinator, a dedicated police officer at the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre, a Musqueam Liaison Officer, an Indigenous Liaison Officer, and an Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer. These positions, described throughout this report, are a vital component of the VPD's strategic mission to engage and build trust with the community.^{viii} Further, the MWCI report provided positive feedback on the work carried out by VPD liaison officers.^{ix}

Engaging Indigenous Women and Girls

Scars in Spirits and Souls

With roots in a matriarchal society, Indigenous women in Canada were esteemed for their spiritual and mental strength; money and power flowed down through mothers. When European colonists ratified legislation reflecting their patriarchal views, “women were not viewed as *persons*; recognizing only indigenous men as leaders of their communities”.^x However, with racist and sexist views, European colonial ideology, repressed and controlled all Indigenous Peoples in Canada, resulting in significant impacts.^{xi}

A primary example of colonial government policies and forced assimilation is the Residential School system. Indigenous children were removed, with force, from their homes and communities to attend church administrated Residential Schools. The purpose of the Residential Schools was to remove Indigenous culture from children and replace it with European colonial culture. Children were treated in horrifying ways; with physical, sexual, and psychological abuse that left them scarred and impacted generations. For example, the trauma from Residential Schools left many Indigenous women suffering from lasting psychological effects, substance use disorders, and a suicide rate that is considerably higher than non-Indigenous people in Canada.^{xii}

I'm ... part of the residential school. I'm part of the healing process.... I want people to understand that wounds - open wounds, they - they don't heal, they just get scars. And believe me, I've got enough of my scars, not only on my outside, but in my spirit, in my heart, in my soul.

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG (2019)

The National Inquiry into MMIWG substantiates the troubling history of Indigenous Peoples and how this has led to unbalanced interactions between police and Indigenous Peoples, including notably high rates of domestic violence. For example, Indigenous women experience higher rates of violent victimization than non-Indigenous women do, with domestic violence being the most pervasive form of victimization experienced.^{xiii,xiv,xv} The 2014 Statistics Canada General Social Survey (GSS) found that 10% of Indigenous women self-reported having been assaulted by a current or former spouse within the last five years compared with 3% of their non-Indigenous counterparts.^{xvi}

Furthermore, the GSS survey has shown that the rate for Indigenous women who reported sexual assault was triple that of non-Indigenous women (11.3% compared to 3.5%). Additionally, in 2018, Indigenous women accounted for 27% of female homicide victims in Canada while only accounting for 2% of the population.^{xvii,xviii}

This unsettling trend with Indigenous women is a concern when examining Vancouver-specific data as well. For example, over a three-year period (2016-2018), 6,671 women were reported as victims in violent incidents in Vancouver. Indigenous women, representing only 2% of the female population in Vancouver, were victims in these incidents 20% (1,333) of the time. Within this same period (2016-2018), Indigenous females comprised 28% of all women reported missing (and 11% of all missing people in the three-year span).

The VPD is aware of the history and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous women, and realizes the effects of colonialization on Indigenous women. The VPD has developed specific programming, in consultation with the Indigenous community, tailored to prevent further violence against Indigenous women and has dedicated positions and programming to help ensure the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

Sex Industry Liaison Officer

Indigenous women have been found to be significantly overrepresented as sex industry workers compared to non-Indigenous women.^{xix,xx} A two-year research study focusing on 181 women involved in Vancouver's sex trade found that 31% of the women were Indigenous.^{xxi} In another study, 96% of the Indigenous women involved in the sex trade reported childhood sexual abuse, compared to 82% of the non-Indigenous women.^{xxii}

The Sex Industry Liaison Officer role has expanded in the community, moving beyond enforcement and into advocacy. This is a proven resource for many Indigenous women, including many who live and work in the Downtown Eastside (DTES).

The duties of this position include but are not limited to:

- accompaniment to follow up appointments (e.g., obtaining audio/video/written statements, victim services, medical appointments);
- transportation to out-of-town court commitments (e.g., Crown Counsel interviews, courtroom preparation, and testifying in court);
- assisting with placement in detox, recovery;
- obtaining transitional housing and second stage housing; and
- connecting with community programs that include housing, mental health, employment, and personal development.

The Sex Industry Liaison Officer works closely with the Women's Information Safe House (WISH) Drop-in Centre where connections are made with Indigenous women of varying ages and backgrounds. As a result of the officer's presence in the community and availability outside of regular office hours, the Sex Industry Liaison Officer assists in a wide range of ways including organizing violence prevention and safety workshops. For example, the Sex Industry Liaison Officer has participated in the Aboriginal Cultural and Creativity Program, which hosts between 8 to 12 participants who are all Indigenous sex workers. This program is held two times per year and includes a ceremonial sage-picking event

hosted by a First Nation community in the Merritt Nicola Valley region and the Conayt Friendship Centre. In addition to VPD participating in picking this medicine, transportation is provided for up to nine women who would otherwise be unable to attend. Approximately 80 other Indigenous women generally attend the event.

Partnerships are essential to the success of the work done by the Sex Industry Liaison Officer. Community partners include WISH, the Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE), First United Church, Carnegie Outreach, Vancouver Coastal Health Intensive Case Management Team, Downtown Community Health Clinic, DTES residences, detox, recovery and transition homes and various shelters (e.g., Triage, Al Mitchell Place, Yukon, and the Evelyn Saller Centre).

The Sex Industry Liaison Officer also initiated and operates the ID4ME program in the DTES. Many community members did not have identification and faced difficulty accessing better housing, bus or airplane travel, and banking as a result. The Sex Industry Liaison Officer secured funding from the Vancouver Police Foundation to help community members obtain government-issued photo ID.

Frontline Officers: Ongoing Engagement with Marginalized Women

As a large proportion of marginalized Indigenous women reside in the DTES and surrounding areas, frontline patrol officers assigned to those areas actively take part in a number of initiatives to support this group. For instance, VPD's patrol members routinely work alongside multiple community partners to better the lives of marginalized Indigenous women, such as advocating for better housing, working out next steps for recovery and treatment, and connecting them with family members. Several patrol officers are active members of the SisterWatch Program; a program designed to learn from and support marginalized Indigenous women.

Frontline members also routinely take part in Indigenous-based ceremonies and events throughout the year. Finally, one patrol officer (from the Beat Enforcement Team) has been assigned as a liaison with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) and works closely with the VPD's Sex industry Liaison Officer.

SisterWatch

Women in Vancouver's DTES are particularly vulnerable to violence, injury, and death. Crime statistics in the DTES have never truly reflected the danger facing the women who live there. Whether the cause is fear of reprisals or general distrust of authority, women have traditionally been reluctant to report crimes against themselves and others.

Following the tragic death of Ashley Machiskinic, the SisterWatch Project began in December 2010 with regular Town Hall meetings consisting of members of the DTES community and VPD members. These members include the Chief Constable, members of the VPD Executive, senior management, as well as frontline officers, who form the SisterWatch committee. SisterWatch meetings are co-chaired by the VPD Chief Constable

and an Elder from the community. The guiding principle of this committee is to provide a safe space for residents of the DTES to voice their concerns and to keep community members informed of police progress concerning investigations, and any advances in community safety.

In addition to the Town Hall meetings, the SisterWatch Project also established the SisterWatch tip line, a special telephone hotline that is staffed by civilian women trained to assist callers who are concerned about their safety. This tip line encourages community members to come forward with information regarding crimes of gender violence, the death of Ashley Machiskinic, or any other safety concerns. Furthermore, a SisterWatch reward of \$10,000 was established for information that proves how and why Ms. Machiskinic fell to her death from a window of a hotel on Hastings Street on September 15, 2010. To date, despite repeated calls for public assistance, no information has come forward.

In order to raise awareness for the SisterWatch Project, special events are held annually to promote the ongoing activities and functions of the SisterWatch Committee and the SisterWatch tip line. As well as attending and hosting events promoting awareness, the SisterWatch Committee also participates in several community and cultural events.

Arising from a recommendation in the MWCI, an evaluation of SisterWatch was completed in 2015, which indicates that SisterWatch has had an optimistic impact on the VPD, the women and Indigenous organizations in the DTES, and their relationships with each other.^{xxiii} As stated in the evaluation, “Is it worth the work involved? There is clear evidence that SisterWatch is worth it.” Further, the enhanced relationships and developing trust has contributed to important investigations and judicially successful cases; notably, these cases would not have come to light without SisterWatch. As outlined in the evaluation, the “capacity of women’s advocates to connect with the leadership of the VPD has had a positive impact on the way in which conflict is addressed between those involved in the committee and therefore how conflict is resolved. This, in turn, has opened the door to collaboration and mutual support...”

VPD Review of Calls for Justice

Reviewing Recruiting Practices

Consistently ranked as one of the most livable major cities in the world, Vancouver attracts diversity from across the globe. A high population density within a large metropolitan area results in significant diversity among the citizens who live in, work in, and visit the CoV. Hiring officers to police such a city requires qualified candidates reflective of the community.

VPD's Recruiting Unit is tasked with hiring the most qualified applicants through outreach, community engagement, and other strategies to connect with communities, individuals, and groups. The VPD Recruiting Unit upholds a philosophy of inclusion.

The following sections outline a review of VPD recruiting practices based on recommendations from the National Inquiry into MMIWG that speak to hiring police officers. This includes the recommendation in the Inquiry of achieving Indigenous and gender diversity through specialized recruitment.²

Promoting Ethnic Diversity

The VPD is committed to diversity in the workplace, with the goal of proportionately representing the citizens of Vancouver. Vancouver residents self-identify as a myriad of ethnicities as listed within the 2016 Statistics Canada census.^{xxiv} The VPD ensures that it reaches out to ethnic communities in their recruitment initiatives to hire personnel that is reflective of Vancouver's population.

Specifically, through recruitment initiatives that place value on diversity, VPD police officers represent numerous ethnic backgrounds with over a quarter of all VPD police officers (26%) being visible minorities. The VPD currently has 27 police officers that are Indigenous, comprising almost 2% of all police officers at the VPD, and representative of the Indigenous population in Vancouver.^{xxv} In addition, three Special Municipal Constables (SMC) (Jail Guards, Traffic Authority, and Community Safety Personnel), and seven civilian members are Indigenous. Diversity in recruiting efforts remains a priority, for example, 3% of the recruits hired in the 2018-2019 year were Indigenous, with 26% of these recruits representing other visible minorities.

Programming and Initiatives to Recruit Indigenous Peoples and 2SLGBTQQIA People

The VPD Recruiting Unit works closely with VPD's DIIRS on efforts to engage communities including the 2SLGBTQQIA and Indigenous communities. For example, the Recruiting Unit participates in programming and events to recruit members of the Indigenous community. Select examples include the following:

² *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (i): Achieve representative First Nations, Inuit, and Métis diversity and gender diversity within all police services through intensive and specialized recruitment across Canada.*

Indigenous Cadet Program

Implemented in 2007 and funded by the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society, the Indigenous Cadet Program (ICP) program is intended to mentor and coach Indigenous youth aged 19 to 31 years who demonstrate a desire to become police officers with the VPD. This unique summer program is open strictly to youth of Indigenous ancestry. During their VPD internship, the Cadets work with Fleet Services, ride along with members from various sections, engage in cultural activities, and participate in the annual Pulling Together Canoe Journey. Individuals that have completed the ICP have been hired as VPD police officers, SMCs, and civilian staff. VPD staff who completed the ICP program prior to being hired have since become mentors to new cadets.

Gathering Our Voices Indigenous Youth Conference

The Recruiting Unit attends the annual Gathering our Voices (GOV) Indigenous conference hosted by the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. This large event attracts thousands of Indigenous youth participants along with their chaperones and other guests of honour. The GOV has provided the VPD Recruiting Unit with an excellent opportunity to promote career opportunities within the VPD.

Hoobiyee (Nisga'a New Year)

The Recruiting Unit attends the annual Vancouver Hoobiyee Festival, a celebration of the waxing crescent moon, hosted by the Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society. This event draws thousands of Indigenous visitors every year, and has provided the VPD Recruiting Unit an opportunity to make positive connections with members of the Indigenous community.

Haida Gwaii

In 2018, Executive members and recruiters of the VPD Recruiting Unit made two visits to Haida Gwaii. They connected with local youth through a presentation at the Gidgalang Kuuyas Naay Secondary and a community open house at the Skidegate Recreational Centre and Band Council office. Recruiters also had discussions with the Chief of the Band and a number of executive members about innovative recruiting initiatives to involve their young Indigenous members in VPD youth programs and the ICP.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

National Indigenous Peoples Day is celebrated annually across Canada on June 21, and in Vancouver it is a full day of events, activities, and performances. The VPD Recruiting Unit attends this annual event hosted by the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society at Trout Lake. This celebration brings together a large population of the Vancouver Indigenous community, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People.

Indigenous Link

The VPD Recruiting Unit recently formed a partnership with Indigenous Link, an online employment search portal that reaches out to an Indigenous audience on a national level. With a virtual presence on this career website, the VPD Recruiting Unit has provided a

unique opportunity for the Indigenous community to connect with the VPD and engage VPD Recruiters on career opportunities with the VPD.

2SLGBTQQIA

Ensuring diverse communities are represented, the VPD Recruiting Unit created a dedicated information session for the 2SLGBTQQIA community. To plan the event, members of the Recruiting Unit were involved in ongoing discussions with VPD's DIIRS, as well as VPD members from the 2SLGBTQQIA community. The well-attended event was held on August 13, 2019 at the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre. The evening included a presentation about the hiring process. Additionally, compelling speakers from the VPD discussed their experiences with the VPD, and resulted in several prospective applications from the VPD's recruiting perspective. This information was also made available through social media via Twitter, which provided prospective applicants with another avenue to reach out to the VPD Recruiting Unit and ask questions in real-time.

Bridging the Gap: Gender Diversity

Gender balance in recruitment is a priority. Currently, females represent 26.6% of all police officers (73.4% are males) and females represent 53.05% of all VPD civilian staff (46.95% are males).

The VPD remains dedicated to ensuring gender diversity through ongoing outreach efforts. For example, in 2018, the VPD Recruiting Unit and multiple sections from the VPD attended an event celebrating female empowerment in Abbotsford. The effectiveness of the targeted female recruitment outreach is consistently reflected in the composition of the recruit classes graduating from the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC). On average, approximately 40% of the VPD recruits in each JIBC class are women.

Respect for equity, diversity, and inclusion is of utmost importance to the VPD and communications are being updated to ensure gender diverse options are provided as a selection criteria when identifying gender in internal and external correspondence.

A Foundation of Culture: Preserving and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages

In 2019, the UN General Assembly declared 2019 as the *International Year of Indigenous Languages*. This was followed by the federal government announcement that the *Indigenous Languages Act* received Royal Assent.^{xxvi} VPD recognizes that language is not just a tool for communication; it is the foundation of culture. Stories, histories, and connections are contained in languages. For these reasons, the VPD considers the continuity of Indigenous languages, regardless of where they are practiced – in urban or rural areas, as important and supports the MMIWG Inquiry's recommendation on Indigenous language capacity within police services.³

³ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (ii): Ensure mandatory Indigenous language capacity within police services.*

For this reason, VPD's DIIRS has used their newsletter to educate VPD personnel on Indigenous language and culture, including the Coast Salish languages. Furthermore, VPD's Indigenous Liaison Officer is currently learning Halmokomelem, a common Coast Salish language.

In addition, the VPD offers an incentive system after 10, 15, and 20 years of service for the Constable rank and within the Sergeant and Staff Sergeant ranks. This incentive program includes specific criteria which when met can be considered as part of this incentive. VPD members have the option of selecting an Indigenous language course and obtain an increment for doing so.

Language Diversity in the VPD

In the ranks of the VPD are police officers from different ethnic backgrounds. These individuals often bring with them unique skills including second languages. The VPD employs officers that speak over 50 different languages. The VPD encourages applicants with diverse language skills to apply to the VPD. Indeed, as recruiting from diverse communities increases, the VPD expects the language diversity to also increase.

The VPD's Human Resources section maintains a list of sworn and civilian members who speak second languages, the proficiency in that language, and whether the language is read, written, and/or spoken. This list is available to all officers in situations where language barriers may exist. Alternatively, police officers may also use external resources such as the Chinatown Community Police Office or the Multi-Lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities. These services are made available to all officers, and outlined in departmental policy, to reduce communication barriers with citizens.

Testing for Bias in Police Recruits

To hire police officers that treat citizens with fairness and equality, the VPD Recruiting Unit assesses biases that police recruits might have as part of the hiring process. Once applicants pass written and physical testing, they are invited to an intake interview that is performed by a Constable from the Recruiting Unit. The intake interview includes reviewing the integrity and lifestyle questionnaire and personal history of the applicants. In addition, it assesses the applicants' integrity, problem-solving abilities, respect for diversity, community service orientation, self-initiative, and acceptance of responsibility. These traits are relevant in determining biases that do not meet VPD standards, thus rejecting applicants from being hired. Furthermore, three specific questions target biases in the intake interview and are revisited during the polygraph phase and again in the Sergeant's Interview (with follow-up questions, as required).

As applicants approach the polygraph stage of the recruiting process, they have already passed through a significant part of the selection process including the intake interview, and psychological testing. The polygraph testing is an integral part of the VPD selection process and is the next step that incorporates screening for biases. This step ensures that applicants are honest and forthright, especially around at-risk behaviours that lead to

integrity issues. Often, information withheld from the previous stages is determined during polygraph testing.

Further along the application process is another interview conducted by a Sergeant in the Recruiting Unit. This interview consists of a comprehensive review of the applicant's file and assessment of the candidate's suitability for proceeding to the background stage.

Prior to the final approval process, a thorough and extensive background investigation is conducted. More specifically, 15 references are interviewed to provide more context and information on the applicant. Importantly, reference checks are also conducted with people not on the reference list supplied by the applicant. The background interview includes questions on the applicant's character, employment history, work ethic, and personality traits. In order to further assess biases, the references are asked if they have: "ever observed or heard the applicant make any overt comments that may suggest a prejudice or discriminatory behaviour? To what extent and concerning which group?" At this point, references will have the opportunity to disclose whether they think an applicant has shown any biased tendencies.

The VPD agrees with the MMIWG recommendation to assess biases in recruits and has protocols in place to ensure that applicants with biases are not hired by the VPD.⁴ The VPD recruiting process offers a robust mechanism, with triangulation, to ensure screening of recruits for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias.

Indigenous Perspective in Hiring VPD Officers

To provide an Indigenous lens, the VPD Recruiting Unit currently has one full-time detective who is of Métis descent. This officer is involved in several aspects of the recruiting process for the SMC and police officer positions. This includes attending outreach events, screening incoming applications, interviewing applicants, and conducting background investigations.

This police officer is also the coordinator of the ICP and is responsible for program promotion and recruitment. Throughout the program, he assists with mentoring the cadets and monitoring their development. At the conclusion of the program, he assesses their competitiveness for other positions in the VPD and assists cadets with the application process for those opportunities.

In collaboration with the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the VPD Training and Recruiting Section will undertake a review of their Indigenous outreach efforts and host information sessions with Indigenous communities in an effort to attract qualified candidates. This will

⁴ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (iii): Ensure that screening of recruits includes testing for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias.*

continue working towards the recommendation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG to include Indigenous community members in the recruitment of police officers.⁵

Strengthening Community Relations

For more than 20 years, the VPD has had a dedicated diversity section (DIIRS) that directly works with populations experiencing significant public safety issues or who are distrusting of the police. Cultural, economic, ethnic, sexual, sexual expression, racial, religious, marginalizing, or other distinguishing characteristics may define these populations. Therefore, the primary goal of DIIRS is to improve outcomes applicable to populations with key issues such as overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, under-reporting of crimes, perceptions of fear and safety, and lack of confidence in the police. This specialized section, with specialized roles, meets the recommendations in the National Inquiry into MMIWG to lead the efforts to engage the Indigenous community (as described below).⁶

VPD's DIIRS provides outreach, develops partnerships, and maintains relationships with various communities and interest groups. Members in this Section act as resources for frontline members who have questions surrounding specific individuals, community resources, or culturally sensitive situations. A total of seven sworn officers and two civilian members are assigned to DIIRS. The Inspector in charge of the DIIRS is responsible for the management and coordination of all section activities and reports directly to the Chief. The Inspector also provides leadership, support, and strategic advice to other VPD sections regarding diverse communities in Vancouver.

Strategies used by DIIRS to address safety issues and cultural factors include supporting the VPD Recruiting Unit to ensure the VPD has a reflective workforce. The Section also works with VPD's Training Unit and other VPD units to provide professional development to frontline members. Relationships are developed with communities at both the management and frontline levels. Outreach is also accomplished through local media and participation in community forums and workshops. To address safety issues, members regularly meet with representatives from diverse communities and provide advice, suggestions, and recommendations.

⁵ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (iv): Include the Indigenous community in the recruitment and hiring committees/process.*

⁶ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.2 (ii) Establish engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and leadership, including women, Elders, youth, and 2SLGBTQIA people from the respective territories and who are residents within a police service's jurisdiction; and*

MMIWG Call for Justice 9.4 (ii): Specialized Indigenous policing units are to lead the services' efforts in community liaison work, community relationship building, and community crime-prevention programs within and for Indigenous communities.

The VPD also has several full-time positions embedded in Indigenous communities and engaged in specific liaison initiatives, as described in the following sections. These positions collaborate with frontline organizations that work to heighten the safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, in line with the MMIWG recommendation to do so.⁷

Furthermore, the B.C. Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) on Missing Person Investigations require that police agencies have protocols in place with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (an agency that has established a delegation agreement with the Provincial Director of Child Welfare to undertake administration of all or parts of the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act*).^{xxvii} These protocols are to facilitate missing person investigations involving youth that are in local group homes or foster care. According to these standards, police agencies in B.C. are to have access to specified resources to obtain advice or assistance during a missing person investigation (e.g., an Indigenous liaison officer).

Neighbourhood Police Officer for the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre
To address social justice issues, improve safety for Indigenous Peoples, and improve the relationship with the VPD through education, awareness, and open dialogue, Vancouver's Indigenous community founded the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre (VACPC). As a non-profit organization, VACPC is governed by a Board of Directors elected by members of Vancouver's Indigenous community. In working with the Indigenous community, local organizations, and all levels of government, the VACPC is better able to provide services, programs and resources to help maintain the security and safety of Indigenous communities in Vancouver. The VACPC provides a safe place where community members can gather to identify, discuss, and address safety issues in Vancouver. The programs offered to the Indigenous community focus on social development, healing, life skills, support, and counseling, through a supportive environment.

As a conduit to VACPC, the VPD maintains a dedicated Neighbourhood Police Officer (NPO) working with the centre to support staff and community members accessing the VACPC. The NPO plays an integral part in fulfilling the mandate of the VACPC, providing support and representing the VPD. The NPO works with the Indigenous population to communicate their needs and concerns to the VPD. Specifically, this NPO is in a unique position to assist Indigenous Peoples when they file a missing person report, and will often assist individuals when liaising with the investigative units. The NPO works to achieve mutual understanding on community police issues, and serves as the primary contact for multiple Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies in Vancouver.

⁷ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.7: We call upon all police services to partner with front-line organizations that work in service delivery, safety, and harm reduction for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people to expand and strengthen police services delivery.*

Indigenous Liaison Officer

The VPD has a dedicated Indigenous Liaison Officer who works with Vancouver's urban Indigenous population to communicate their needs and concerns to the VPD. The aim is to achieve mutual understanding and/or alignment on community and police issues.

The Indigenous Liaison Officer also works closely with community partners to provide healthy activities for high-risk Indigenous youth such as hiking, learning opportunities, and cultural outings. Many Indigenous youth have developed a trusting relationship with the Indigenous Liaison Officer through participation in different programs. The Indigenous Liaison Officer works one-on-one with Indigenous youth, and serves as a positive adult role model in the lives of many Indigenous youth, including current or former gang members.

Effective community work requires face-to-face coordination with someone in a position of trust and respect. The Indigenous Liaison Officer fulfills that role and also acts as a resource for frontline patrol members who may have questions about specific individuals, resources available in the community, or how best to approach situations in a culturally sensitive manner. The Indigenous Liaison Officer also provides frontline officers with assistance, monitors Indigenous gang activity in Vancouver, and represents the VPD at many community functions and meetings.

Musqueam Liaison Officer

The Musqueam Indian Band (MIB) is located in the southwest area of Vancouver. There is a service agreement between MIB and the CoV, where the City provides municipal services such as policing to the Musqueam area. The VPD has a dedicated Musqueam Liaison Officer who is responsible for this community and works closely with the Band administration.

The Musqueam Liaison Officer works with the people of the Musqueam nation and provides culturally sensitive police services. This includes partaking in speaking engagements that bring awareness to the history of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, as well as participation in activities to improve police relations with the MIB.

The Musqueam Liaison Officer participated in the "Circle of Understanding" cultural competency training, with police recruits at the JIBC and takes part in events such as the UBC Circle of Juvenile Justice (2012) and the Brown Bag Lunch Series (JIBC, 2012). The Musqueam Liaison Officer also hosts university classes on a tour of the Musqueam lands as a way to share the history of the nation and region, while highlighting the positive policing that occurs in the community. Furthermore, the Musqueam Liaison Officer regularly engages in activities that take place in the Musqueam area including celebratory (e.g., graduations) or otherwise (e.g., funerals). More recently, the Musqueam Liaison Officer has been developing relationships with the Elders and youth through programming and safety talks. In the spring of 2019, the Musqueam Liaison Officer attended the GOV conference in Port Alberni with Musqueam youth.

The Musqueam Liaison Officer endeavours to build strong relationships with the Musqueam community. All MIB members have access to the liaison's cell phone number and a timely

call back is received from the officer regardless of the time of day. The Musqueam Liaison Officer develops knowledge of the history of the families in Musqueam, and endeavors to maintain positive relationships with those families.

The Musqueam Liaison Officer works with the MIB to improve safety in community. One example is the advent of a “Community Safety Committee” which mobilizes in the event of a community member going missing. The Musqueam Liaison Officer works closely with this community as liaison to other VPD specialty sections. This committee is made up of the managers from the critical departments of the MIB, such as Health, Safety and Security, Social Development, Drug and Alcohol Prevention, and Finance. The Community Safety Committee often acts on behalf of the family, and reaches out to the VPD MPU to coordinate efforts through the Musqueam Liaison member.

LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer

The LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer is responsible for working with various interest groups in the 2SLGBTQQIA community. This officer also works with VPD members to increase organizational awareness and facilitate resolution of issues affecting all members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community.

The LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer is actively involved in committee work that furthers departmental and community interests. The core functions of this position include ongoing cultural training of VPD personnel regarding 2SLGBTQQIA communities. This liaison supports other police departments with regards to 2SLGBTQQIA issues, and is working on the implementation of the CoV Trans*, Gender Variant, and Two-Spirited Inclusion recommendations.

The LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer works with 2SLGBTQQIA community groups and organizations (youth groups – senior groups – sex worker groups – trans groups and individuals) and has oversight of the Safe Place Program. This program is an initiative that distributes rainbow decals to businesses, schools, and other locations, to provide a safe refuge for members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community, who feel their safety is threatened. Other work includes ongoing training of community groups and organizations that serve the 2SLGBTQQIA communities, committee work through the CoV LGTBQ2S+ Advisory Committee, and the development of 2SLGBTQQIA programming such as the *Love Who You Want* campaign.

Homeless Outreach Officer

In December 2018, a report by the Homelessness Services Association of BC, Urban Matters and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, detailing the regional distribution and general characteristics of the homeless population was released.^{xxviii} The findings revealed a steep increase in homelessness across Metro Vancouver, with 828 more people identified as homeless in 2018 (3,605) compared to 2014 (2,227), representing a 30% increase in homelessness and the highest numbers to date. Indigenous homelessness is also on the rise, with 34% (746) of all homeless people identifying as Indigenous in 2018, compared to 31% (582) in 2014.

Strong partnerships between all levels of government, non-profit and co-operative housing providers, and community support services are required to build safe and inclusive neighbourhoods. Organizations such as BC Housing, Ministry of Social Development, faith-based organizations, non-profit housing operators working in single room occupancy and shelter systems, as well as community members, partner to provide support to the marginalized population. Towards this goal, in 2009, the VPD developed the role of a Homeless Outreach Constable. The Homeless Outreach Constable conducts outreach work with the homeless and coordinates with mental health, addiction, housing serving sectors, and municipal and provincial governments. The Constable also acts as a resource for external agencies, as well as internal sections within the VPD.

Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer

The VPD recently implemented a new Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer position in the Community Services Section to work directly with the Indigenous community to develop both VPD and community programming, act as a resource for VPD members on Indigenous culture, and serve as member of the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee. This officer advises the VPD on all Indigenous protocols related to formal events and integrating these protocols into current VPD ceremonies. In addition to these duties, the Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer is a dedicated point of contact for community members to raise concerns they may have and that can be addressed through the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee.

The Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer serves as the primary contact for multiple Indigenous agencies in Vancouver and serves as a Director on the Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), a registered non-profit society with the Province of B.C. and a federally registered charitable organization. The Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer is also a Director at the Circle of Eagles Lodge, a men's residential facility providing care and custody to Indigenous men 19 years of age and over who have been conditionally released from federal institutions. This facility provides room and board, individual counseling, life skills training and job preparation, self-help programs, and traditional healing practices.

Indigenous Advisory Committee

The VPD and Vancouver's Indigenous community leaders collaborated in the creation of the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee, which was established in late 2018 with the first meeting in February 2019. The VPD meets the recommendation from the National Inquiry on establishing a civilian Indigenous Advisory Committee⁸ and the call to increase communication with Indigenous communities to inform them on policies, practices and programs that make communities safe.⁹

⁸ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.8: We call upon all police services to establish and engage with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee for each police service or police division, and to establish and engage with a local civilian Indigenous advisory committee to advise the detachment operating within the Indigenous community.*

⁹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (i): Establish a communication protocol with Indigenous communities to inform them of policies, practices, and programs that make the communities safe.*

The VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee is comprised of eight recognized and respected members of Vancouver's Indigenous community, including Métis representation,¹⁰ and executive representation from the VPD. The Indigenous Advisory Committee meets quarterly to connect and advise the VPD on current issues relating to Indigenous and police relations within the community.

The Indigenous Advisory Committee a multi-faceted initiative designed to enhance the relationship between police and the Indigenous community. Organizations and partners in this group include the Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Society, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, VACPC, and Warriors Against Violence.

The specific goals/objectives that direct its efforts include:

- relationship building and trust building with the Indigenous community and the VPD;
- eliminating barriers between police and Indigenous residents and community;
- supporting education, cultural awareness, and other events to further build trusting relationships between residents, the Indigenous community and the VPD; and
- sharing information on current issues within the Indigenous community.

Partnerships Established through Investigative Sections

In addition to serving as members on the SisterWatch committee, members of the VPD Special Investigations Section (SIS) are partners in The Treehouse Vancouver Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC), a collaborative initiative between the VPD, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV), BC Children's Hospital, MCFD, and Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS).

The Treehouse coordinates and houses a dynamic, multi-disciplinary response to child abuse, which includes the investigation of child abuse and access to other supportive services. The Treehouse works to minimize trauma and to enhance the community's ability to protect children. The dedicated on-site team comprises VPD Sex Crimes Unit (SCU) detectives, social workers from MCFD and VACFSS, community-based victim support workers from FSGV, a service director and coordinator from The Treehouse, and an accredited facility dog from Pacific Assistance Dogs Society.

In addition to the Treehouse, investigators in the SCU rely on the support of VACFSS for child abuse or sexual assault investigations that are not conducted at the CYAC. For example, VACFSS counselors support Indigenous victims by providing counseling and/or

¹⁰ *MMIWG Call for Justice 17.14: We call upon police services to establish better communication with Métis communities and populations through representative advisory boards that involve Métis communities and address their needs.*

treatment services, they also assist by providing more information on the criminal justice system. VPD's Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment (DVACH) Unit investigators and Victim Support Workers attend quarterly meetings at VACFSS headquarters in Vancouver. Other community partners in attendance include Probation Officers, MCFD representatives, and various advocacy group representatives.

VPD's DVACH Unit collaborates with a variety of community partners to help those involved in violent situations with their intimate partner. For example, DVACH detectives will often work with the Musqueam Liaison Officer and the MIB Security when incidents of intimate partner violence occur in the community. This collaboration often involves offender management and safety planning with the victims. DVACH also works closely with community services societies, namely VACPC and WISH. Continued training and sharing of appropriate information is vital to maintaining community relationships that are relied upon to ensure the safety of victims.

DVACH investigators ensure that they develop community connections via presentations and meetings with community members. For example, a DVACH Sergeant and Victim Support Workers from FSGV present to group participants, including Indigenous women, transgendered persons, sex workers, and those with mental health and addiction issues. The participants are actively involved in relationships or situations that expose them to frequent physical violence, largely intimate partner violence. Select topics are presented including safety planning, justice system processes, counseling and support services, discussions around bridging the barriers to reporting to police, amongst other topics.

Another section within the SIS is the Counter Exploitation Unit (CEU). The CEU does not have programs, initiatives, or training specifically targeted towards Indigenous Peoples. However, the CEU philosophy focuses on protecting all vulnerable and exploited persons in the sex industry. A high percentage of such sex workers are Indigenous. The CEU has an imbedded FSGV Case Worker who frequently acts as a bridge between sexually exploited Indigenous women and the police. This Case Worker is mindful of the systemic issues that may prevent women from disclosing their criminal victimization to the police. In addition to this partnership with FSGV, CEU members will exchange information related to identified risks, offenders, and exploitive practices with community partners such as WISH, UNYA, and VACFSS.

Connections through Victim Services

The *BC Victims of Crime Act*^{xxix} and the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*^{xxx} stipulates that victims of crime must receive information on the services available to them. In line with this, the VPD's Victim Services Unit provides victims and witnesses with professional, supportive, and timely assistance, to lessen the impact of crime and trauma. Services may include emotional support, practical assistance, justice-related information and referrals to other agencies. Target outcomes include improved safety, reduced risk of further victimization, access to information and support, enhanced criminal investigations and increased willingness to participate in the criminal justice system.

VPD's Victim Services Unit follows mandated protocols to refer clients to specific community agencies, several of which are tailored towards Indigenous clients. When a victim of crime self-discloses that they are Indigenous to one of the VPD caseworkers, they refer them to Indigenous-focused services such as the Aboriginal Wellness Program, the Indigenous Court Support Worker, Watari Youth, Family and Community Services, or Aboriginal Front Door. Referrals are also made to DEWC, Battered Women's Support Services, Women Against Violence Against Women, and other community partner agencies that also offer culturally-specific services as required by the victim.

Other Community Programming to Heighten Safety

Women's Personal Safety Team

In January 2013, 16 female police officers of various levels of seniority and experience were recruited as volunteers and trained to form the Women's Personal Safety Team (WPST). As news of the WPST circulated, more female police officers expressed interest in participating. As of 2019, the WPST consists of 30 instructors who volunteer their time to teach women skills and concepts regarding crime prevention and dealing effectively with violent encounters. The workshops are designed to be easily learned and remembered by women with little or no tactical training.

The WPST has several community partners, including SisterWatch, and the Right to Play program, that work with Indigenous Youth and the VACPC. Ensuring Indigenous women are receiving training, workshops have been held for women in the Musqueam nation and at the Vancouver Native Housing Society. Safety training is also provided to other low to no barrier women's housing in the DTES. Approximately 30% to 40% of the participants are Indigenous women.

Safe Place

The Safe Place program was launched in July 2016 with the goal to increase 2SLGBTQQIA community safety. Safe Place is a partnership program with the business community. Partnering businesses welcome people in need of police assistance, and provide safe shelter until officers arrive. Participating businesses display the Safe Place decal and are vetted by the VPD. Participating businesses sign a pledge indicating their support for the community and acknowledge their willingness to assist any potential victims.

Originally developed by the Seattle Police Department, the VPD is the first Canadian police department to launch this program. The CoV and the Vancouver School Board also partner with this initiative and display the Safe Place decals in each of their schools. To date, there are over 500 participating businesses in the CoV.

Lunch with the Chief

The Lunch with the Chief series is a popular quarterly event that has been well received by the DTES community, since the initial launch in February 2014. The purpose of this event is to provide a casual environment with frontline VPD members, and members of the VPD Executive, to foster positive relationship building while sharing in meaningful conversations

and food. Taking place in the heart of the DTES at the Carnegie Community Centre, this event provides the opportunity for individuals to interact and create relationships with police members.

Many community members who have attended have indicated that they relished the opportunity to put names to faces, and appreciate the chance to have positive and engaging interactions with police members in a friendly environment. VPD's Sex Industry Liaison Officer, Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer, and Indigenous Liaison Officer distribute tickets in the community, and a large proportion of participants are Indigenous Peoples. The VPD invites guest speakers that are Elders from local nations and other key figures.

Throughout the year, many community events are held to foster positive relations between diverse communities, including Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA people and the VPD. For example, the VPD participates in the annual Pulling Together Canoe Journey, which has been successful in building cooperation amongst various cultures, non-profit groups, and government agencies in B.C. for the past 18 years. Designed to encourage understanding and bring public safety agencies and Indigenous Peoples together, the annual event includes canoe families from the Pulling Together Canoe Society, and Métis, Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh nations.¹¹

Culturally Appropriate and Gender-Neutral Policy, Practices, and Procedures

The Planning, Research, and Audit Section (PR&A) is responsible for policy development for the VPD. Staff in PR&A are responsible to ensure that departmental policy uses gender-neutral language, and to ensure that policy is written so that it is equitably applied. The VPD ensures that its policies, practices, and procedures do not impact men and women differently. Furthermore, policy analysis is done beyond gender, and includes potential impacts on other identifying factors including age, sexual orientation, sexual expression, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. In developing policy and practice, the VPD incorporated the principles of the *B.C. Human Rights Code*^{xxxix}, as well as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*^{xxxix}, which prohibit discrimination against any person on personal characteristic grounds. Collectively, the VPD regularly revises and reviews policies, practices, and procedures to ensure culturally appropriate and bias-free service delivery, compliant with the recommendation in the Inquiry for police services to do so.¹²

¹¹ MMIWG Call for Justice 17.12: *We call upon police services to build partnerships with Métis communities, organizations, and people to ensure culturally safe access to police services.*

¹² MMIWG Call for Justice 9.2 (i): *Review and revise all policies, practices, and procedures to ensure service delivery that is culturally appropriate and reflects no bias or racism toward Indigenous Peoples, including victims and survivors of violence.*

Culturally Appropriate Policy

The VPD recognizes the many diverse cultures and religions that co-exist in Vancouver, each with unique customs, beliefs and traditions. This may include wearing special garments, carrying cultural or religious items, or observing traditional ceremonies and practices. In the course of their duties, members may be required to search arrested persons in possession of cultural, religious or spiritual items. These items may pose unique considerations for members when balancing the need to ensure safety, enforce the law and conduct criminal investigations while preserving the person's dignity and respecting the sanctity of their culture.

VPD policies and practices balance officer safety, legal authority and investigation, with cultural sensitivity and respect. In 2017, the VPD amended its search policy as such so that members must refer to guidelines referencing cultural considerations; this includes when VPD officers are searching an individual with an Indigenous medicine bag, for example. A medicine bag is a small pouch containing objects of spiritual significance to its owner, such as stones, herbs and other objects intended to bring health, protection or healing. The medicine bag is considered sacred and traditionally the objects within should only be handled by its owner or an Elder. If a search of a medicine bag or other religious or spiritual articles is required, the examining officer should request the owner open the pouch and manipulate the objects for visual inspection if possible and if safe to do so.

The arresting officer, with approval of the Jail Sergeant, should allow the person to keep the medicine bag in their possession while in custody if it is deemed safe to do so. If the owner cannot be permitted to retain their medicine bag, the owner should place the medicine bag into a property bag separate from other possessions, and place the property bag into the larger property bag containing their remaining possessions. This is because a medicine bag should only be handled by its owner or an Elder, and should not be touched by others. When returning the item, the owner should be permitted to remove the medicine bag from the property bag so that no one else touches it.

Respecting Gender Identity

Part of the core values of the VPD are compassion and respect. Effectively serving diverse communities begins with understanding and respecting the sensitivities of individuals. With these values in mind, persons may identify, or present themselves, as a gender that is different to their perceived appearance or what is stated on their official identification.

The courts have established that transgender people are protected from discrimination because they are covered by the ground of 'sex'. As such, VPD police officers, in departmental policy, are advised to make reasonable attempts to avoid mislabeling a person during interactions and when recording the name and gender of a person in police documentation and reports.

Employment Supports for Indigenous Police Officers

VPD Peer Support is based on the idea that a police officer is more likely to confide in someone he or she trusts. A trained peer has the cultural competence necessary to understand the unique challenges faced by a colleague and can provide confidential help and resources when needed. Peer support is not intended to replace formal mental health care, however it can provide easily accessible, 24/7 emotional support for fellow officers.

The members of the VPD Peer Support Unit offer outreach services to sworn personnel and their families, provide mentorship, emotional support, problem solving, goal setting, crisis risk assessment and referrals to other community resources. In addition to these functions, the VPD Peer Support Unit is responsible for two formal "peer based" wellness programs at the VPD; The Road to Mental Readiness Program and the Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).

Providing employment support, the VPD CISM and Peer Support Program offer culturally sensitive referrals upon requests. Should an Indigenous officer require health and wellness referrals, these units can liaise with the Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer and obtain relevant community resources that meet the individual needs of the police officer.

Furthermore, VPD encourages Indigenous members to attend relevant Indigenous cultural events as part of their duties. For example, in line with the recommendation to retain Indigenous officers through employment support and offer incentives to Indigenous officers, VPD personnel who attend the Pulling Together Journey are credited on-duty time while on the Journey during their scheduled workdays.¹³

Policy on Limited Duration Posts

A recommendation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG is for police services to end the practices of limited-duration posts, and instead implement a policy regarding remote and rural communities focused on building and sustaining a relationship with the local community and cultures.¹⁴ Limited-duration posts generally applies to Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachments in communities that are considered remote or have a reduced level of community services, such as education or health care. RCMP posts typically last three to four years, with possibilities of extension by up to two years.

Although the VPD does not have limited-duration posts, the VPD provides policing services to Indigenous communities within the CoV. Examples of specialty positions within the VPD

¹³ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (vi): Retain Indigenous officers through relevant employment supports, and offer incentives to Indigenous officers to meet their unique needs as Indigenous officers serving Indigenous communities, to ensure retention and overall health and wellness of the service.*

¹⁴ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (vii): End the practice of limited-duration posts in all police services, and instead implement a policy regarding remote and rural communities focused on building and sustaining a relationship with the local community and cultures. This relationship must be led by, and in partnership with, the Indigenous Peoples living in those remote and rural communities.*

that have mandates directly related to servicing the Indigenous community were outlined in previous sections (including the Indigenous Liaison Officer, Musqueam Liaison Officer and the Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer).

The VPD's Tenure Policy allows the majority of officers to remain in a specialty position for a duration of five years. The VPD Tenure Policy has provisions that allow for tenure length extensions to be granted according to the following conditions:

- the exemption is in the best interest of the member and the organization;
- no other member has the requisite training, skills, abilities or expertise for the specified assignment; and
- there are extenuating or exceptional circumstances that could not be foreseen, that require consideration to vary the Tenure Policy.

Guidelines for Policing the Sex Industry

Stemming from long-term systemic issues resulting from colonization, racism, and the Residential School system, the VPD recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented among survival sex workers.^{xxxiii} To open lines of communication and foster increased engagement, the VPD implemented the "Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines" in January 2013 as a guiding document to establish a process by which the VPD may work with the sex industry community to open lines of communication and foster increased engagement.^{xxxiv} The Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines assisted frontline officers in understanding the VPD's philosophy and expectations regarding the investigation of crime in the sex industry.

In his MWCI report,^{xxxv} Commissioner Wally Oppal supported the VPD's Sex Enforcement Guidelines. Specifically, he commended the community engagement process taken in their development, while referring to guidelines as "a model of community policing at its best."^{xxxvi} Further, in the recommendations, Commissioner Oppal suggested that all other police forces in B.C. consider implementing similar guidelines.^{xxxvii}

The VPD Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines are outdated now as the Criminal Code changed with the enactment of Bill C-36 in 2015.^{xxxviii} Nonetheless, the B.C. Provincial Sex Enforcement Guidelines and Principles were established in January 2018. The VPD was an active member of a provincial Police Services working group that helped establish these guidelines for the province. The Provincial Guidelines, which the VPD currently follow, closely resemble the VPD Guidelines. Nonetheless, VPD's enforcement strategy within the VPD guidelines has not changed. VPD's enforcement priority is to maintain the safety of sex workers by targeting those that exploit, abuse, and or use violence against sex workers, especially youth and other vulnerable sectors of our community.

The VPD values building relationships with those involved in the sex industry to increase the safety of the workers, reduce victimization and violence, and where appropriate (such as with youth) assist with exit strategies. In all situations, VPD officers will treat those in the

sex industry with respect and dignity. These guidelines, in line with a recommendation in the MMIWG Inquiry for police services to develop and implement guidelines for the policing of the sex industry¹⁵, and to ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQQIA people in the sex industry,¹⁶ outline response strategies, and ensure a consistent and respectful message when VPD officers deal with anyone involved in the sex industry.

Training: Increasing Cultural Competence & Ensuring Trauma Informed Practices

The VPD is sensitive to unique needs associated with particular communities. For example, the Indigenous Peoples of Canada include diverse groups of Peoples with distinct cultural and social characteristics. For police and other law enforcement personnel, understanding the unique history and culture of Indigenous Peoples is an important part of effective communication and interaction with the Indigenous Peoples, and communities they serve. The VPD ensures staff are educated with cultural competency training, and working with vulnerable groups. The following sections outlines VPD training initiatives that speak to recommendations in the Inquiry, regarding appropriate training and education for officers.

Recruit Training at the JIBC

All municipal police officers in B.C. receive their foundational training at the JIBC. The VPD supports recommendation 9.3 (v) to train police recruits on the oppression of Indigenous Peoples as well as anti-racism, anti-bias training.¹⁷

The VPD agrees with the Inquiry's findings that Canada's historical mistreatment of Indigenous people needs to be a core component of police recruit training. Further, it is the VPD's position that this training may be best facilitated by Indigenous Elders and persons who can best convey the intergenerational effects that have resulted.

Promising Practices: Trauma Informed Investigators

Experts agree that the attitude conveyed by police is "the single most important factor in determining the success of the victim interview, and therefore the entire investigation."^{xxxix} Effective investigations, including sexual assaults files, require unbiased, capable, empathic, and well-trained investigators. Research has found that victims of sexual assaults

¹⁵ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.11: We call upon all police services to develop and implement guidelines for the policing of the sex industry in consultation with women engaged in the sex industry, and to create a specific complaints mechanism about police for those in the sex industry.*

¹⁶ *MMIWG Call for Justice 18.14: Police services take appropriate steps to ensure safety of 2SLGBTQQIA people in the sex industry.*

¹⁷ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.3 (v): In training recruits, include: history of police in the oppression and genocide of Indigenous Peoples; anti-racism and anti-bias training; and culture and language training. All training must be distinctions-based and relevant to the land and people being served; training must not be pan-Indigenous.*

often omit information during police interviews, if they perceive the officer is rushed, impatient, aggressive, or unfriendly.^{xi} Furthermore, the VPD is aware that inadequately trained officers may contribute to assaulted victims experience with secondary victimization; if victims feels unsafe during interviews, they may not be able to retrieve certain memories.^{xli}

In recent years, trauma informed practices (TIP) have evolved out of the neurobiological understanding of how trauma influences the brain's ability to process, retain, and relay information. Traditional police interview methods were not based on this knowledge and did not yield the best information. The VPD is sensitive to the fact that trauma has a neurobiological impact and for these reasons, it has adopted trauma-informed practice.

The VPD's SIS began exploring a trauma informed investigative practice in 2017. The section continues to educate members in other investigative areas on the impact of trauma since first introducing the concept in 2014. The VPD recognizes the importance and is compliant with the recommendation to ensure all staff understand and implement culturally appropriate and TIP practices.¹⁸

In 2018, all investigators in SIS received training on *Trauma Informed Policing: Understanding the Neurobiological and Psychological Effects of Sexual Assault*. The VPD is currently working on delivering this training to the Major Crime Section (MCS) as well. To expand trauma-informed training, in 2019, two VPD SIS investigators attended an International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) course in the United States for training and course evaluation (*Trauma Informed Sexual Assault Investigations*). The VPD members are in the process of preparing a report on the IACP course, with the intention of determining the applicability of this course for VPD.

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Department of Justice (2019)

Fair and Impartial Policing

Recently, the VPD has implemented mandatory Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) training, a full day workshop delivered to more than 600 frontline operational members. Developed in the United States, FIP was adopted and redesigned by the Provincial Government in response to the 2012 MWCI. Specifically, the Inquiry recommended that police officers in B.C. undergo mandatory training concerning vulnerable community members.

¹⁸ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.2 (iv): Undertake training and education of all staff and officers so that they understand and implement culturally appropriate and trauma-informed practices, especially when dealing with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.*

The workshop (most recently provided in 2018 to all frontline officers) illustrates how implicit biases may affect police perception and behaviour, and as a result negatively affect community members. The objective of the FIP workshop is to help police officers recognize “implicit-bias” and develop skills and tactics to reduce the influence of bias on police practice. There is specific focus given to the effect of bias on Indigenous and Black communities. A fundamental concept in the training is that all people can have biases that could influence actions and that policing based on stereotypes can be unsafe, ineffective, and importantly—unjust. Learning objectives in FIP training include the following:

- reflect on the lived experience of an Indigenous person who experienced racial profiling by a police officer and how it impacted them;
- understand biases are normal and that all people, even well-intentioned, have biases;
- explain why persons who are part of a vulnerable population are likely to be subject to implicit bias;
- explain how implicit bias played a role in investigations of missing women in the DTES of Vancouver (as described in the MWC1);
- reflect upon and articulate the impact biased policing has on community members;
- explain the importance of police legitimacy and the threats to it;
- describe some historical examples of threats to police legitimacy in Canada;
- explain how procedural justice produces police legitimacy and be able to articulate the major components of procedural justice;
- explain and demonstrate strategies that will help them be aware of personal biases; and
- explain and demonstrate strategies (i.e., FIP skills) to ensuring that their behaviour is bias free.

Increasing Cultural Awareness

VPD Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training

Aboriginal Cultural Competency (ACC) training was designed to increase knowledge, enhance self-awareness, and strengthen the skills of those who work both directly and indirectly with Indigenous Peoples. The goal of the ACC training was to further develop individual competencies and promote positive partnerships. Participants learned about aspects of colonial history such as the Residential School system, a timeline of historical events, and contexts for understanding social disparities and inequities. Through interactive activities, participants examined culture, stereotyping, and the consequences and legacies of colonization. Participants were also introduced to tools for developing more effective communication and relationship building skills. Two Residential School survivors and Elders from the Indigenous community have conducted this training, since 2015, for approximately

650 frontline members, volunteers, jail and civilian staff of the VPD. This training was also delivered to the VPD Executive.

Special Municipal Constable Program: Indigenous Peoples' Awareness Course

The Community Awareness: Indigenous Peoples' Awareness course has been a mandatory component of the SMC Program since 2014. Through the use of the video "The Spirit Has No Colour" and classroom discussion, learners become familiar with the impact of European contact on Indigenous culture, the role of law enforcement and its impact on Indigenous culture, and the steps law enforcement may take to build relationships. Learning outcomes of this course include:

- development of an awareness of the history of Indigenous Peoples (including the history of Métis peoples)¹⁹ particularly in B.C.;
- familiarity with the role of police in the enforcement of the laws of Canada that today are deemed to have been damaging to Indigenous Peoples, destructive to their culture, language and spiritual values and practices, and based on the belief that Indigenous Peoples are culturally inferior;
- demonstration of an understanding of the consequences of generations of children being taken from their families and placed into the Residential Schools of this country, systematically destroying family systems, and the possible learning of family practices and parenting skills; and
- the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the connection between drug and alcohol abuse, family disintegration, and the loss of cultural identity to the sexual, psychological, physical and other abuse that was common in Residential Schools.

Aboriginal and First Nations Awareness Course

A six-hour eLearning course has been offered since 2016 to all new VPD members hired from other police departments (referred to as exempt employees). These employees would have missed the previous ACC offered in 2015. The Aboriginal and First Nations Awareness course provides basic knowledge of the history and geography of Indigenous Peoples. It is the foundation for understanding contemporary issues pertaining to Indigenous lands, cultures, and communities. This course has several learning outcomes:

- an understanding of who Indigenous Peoples are and definitions of the terms that are commonly used to refer to Indigenous peoples in Canada;
- knowledge of the history, geography, and demographic characteristics of Indigenous Peoples;
- understanding how Indigenous Peoples perceive relationships with land;

¹⁹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 17.13: We call upon police services to engage in education about the unique history and needs of Métis communities.*

- recollection of the history of Indigenous treaties;
- define culture and its influence on the Indigenous way of life, communication, and points of view;
- recognition of the characteristics of the six Indigenous cultural regions in Canada;
- familiarity with the differences between Indigenous and traditional Western cultures; and
- understanding the impact of the various social and economic factors facing Indigenous communities across Canada today.

Circle of Understanding at the JIBC

The Circle of Understanding serves as cultural competency training for all municipal police recruits completing their Block III training sessions, and prior to graduation from the JIBC. This training was designed to help increase knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture, history and heritage, with an emphasis on the history of colonization in Canada and the impact of Residential schools upon Indigenous Peoples. During the training, the film “The Spirit Has No Colour” is screened for recruits and participants hear stories from Residential School survivors to comprehend the extent of trauma and suffering endured. An Elder is often in attendance to impart wisdom and culture through singing and drumming, and the Indigenous Liaison Officer helps to lead a smudging ceremony.

In October 2016, the Circle of Understanding was held at the JIBC, and the NPO from the VACPC provided training sessions for all attendees. This marked the first time that a Circle of Understanding session was conducted with a Sheriff’s class in attendance, and there was great feedback from all of the participants. In addition, the VPD Indigenous Liaison and Musqueam Liaison Officers led several training sessions with various municipal police forces in order to increase cultural understanding and awareness of Indigenous topics within policing.

KAIROS Blanket Exercise

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an experiential teaching tool based on participatory education methodologies and employs Indigenous practices to build awareness and understanding of our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. This exercise is utilized by government agencies across Canada as part of the reconciliation through education. Members of the VPD Executive and senior management team received this training in April 2019.

Developing Awareness on Other Vulnerable Populations

Homelessness Awareness

The Homelessness Awareness course provides all patrol and SMC officers with information about homelessness and the impact it has on Canadian society. The course also reviews the various legal authorities VPD police officers have at their disposal. In 2014, the

Homelessness Awareness course was delivered online to all frontline officers, where they were required to complete a 60-minute session that includes videos, practice activities and a final assessment. This course has several learning outcomes:

- develop an awareness of homelessness and its causes in Canada;
- develop an awareness of Canada's homelessness situations; and
- develop an awareness of the impact homelessness has on Canadian society.

Youth at Risk

The Youth at Risk course provides all frontline and SMC of the VPD information about at risk youth in relation to anti-social/delinquent behaviours and sexual exploitation.

Mandatory for all patrol officers, this course also reviews the various legal authorities VPD police officers have at their disposal, including the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The Youth at Risk course was delivered online in 2014, and officers were required to complete a 60 minute session that including videos, practice activities and a final assessment. This course has several learning outcomes:

- develop an awareness of adolescent brain development and its impact on decision making;
- analyze how youth at risk can be impacted by gangs;
- develop an awareness of sexual exploitation and at risk youth; and
- paraphrase key points of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

Sex Work and Sex Workers Awareness Course

Offered first to all frontline officers in 2014, *Sex Work and Sex Workers Awareness* is a 90 minutes eLearning course that provides a comprehensive overview of sex work and the impact it has on society in Canada. This course provides practical knowledge for officers working with sex workers, case studies that highlight various perspectives, as well as the legal authorities police officers have at their disposal. The VPD is currently working on revising this course, as it will continue to be offered.

Since 2014, all newly hired exempt VPD members receive this course as part of their education. In addition, the course is a mandatory component of the Community Awareness Component in the SMC Program. In total, 924 VPD members have taken the course, which includes a final assessment. The learning outcomes for this course consisted of:

- an awareness of the language and misconceptions surrounding sex work;
- an awareness of the impact of human trafficking on the sex work industry: defining human trafficking;

- an awareness of the criminal law relating to sex work; and
- an awareness of the role of the VPD's Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines.

In March and April of 2019, SIS delivered condensed training to all frontline members on sex workers awareness.

Gay, Trans, and Blue LGBTQ2S+

Offered in 2017, the *Gay, Trans and Blue LGBTQ2S+* training provided all VPD patrol members an awareness and appreciation for Vancouver's 2SLGBTQQIA community.²⁰ The course developed an understanding of the importance of the VPD's role within this community. The *Gay, Trans, and Blue LGBTQ2S+* training was delivered in-class, where participants were required to complete an eight-hour session that included instructor led presentations, videos, group activities and discussions with a guest speaker.

The training addressed the following topics based on the Human Rights Tribunal Recommendations:

- LGBTQ2S+ language and terminology competency;
- gender frameworks and models;
- LGBTQ2S+ pronouns and relation to VPD Policy;
- contextualizing LGBTQ2S+ histories in Canada; and
- reflection on LGBTQ2S+ lived experiences.

Learning outcomes for this training include:

- identify appropriate language or terminology for the LGBTQ2S+ Community;
- acknowledge the sensitivities of the LGBTQ2S+ community;
- define the language used in the LGBTQ2S+ community;
- identify appropriate communication methods with the LGBTQ2S+ community;
- identify challenges for transgendered persons; and
- review VPD policy and legal authorities.

Training On Missing Persons Investigations

On September 1, 2016, the B.C. Policing and Security Branch launched an online course for *Missing Person Investigations in British Columbia* for police services in B.C. This 30-

²⁰ *MMIWG Call for Justice 18.13 Police services engage in education regarding 2SLGBTQQIA people to address discrimination, especially homophobia and transphobia.*

minute eLearning course is designed to orientate the learner to the BCPPS on Missing Person Investigations (BCPPS 5.1) and the *Missing Persons Act* (the Act).^{xiii}

The course promotes awareness of standards, highlights key aspects for police services at the organization level, and identifies key procedural elements of the standards. The course also promotes awareness of the tools available to police under the Act, and the circumstances and constraints governing their use. All frontline officers were required to take this course in 2016 (673 VPD officers completed it). This course is also a component in the VPD Patrol Re-Integration Education Program; this ensures that all VPD officers who were not in patrol during the cycle offering and are returning to patrol are aware of the important content in this course.

The VPD recognizes the value and importance of training designed to increase cultural awareness and enhance service delivery. The VPD will continue to deliver training that is timely, trauma informed, and sensitive to the unique requirements of the culturally diverse communities of Vancouver.

Reviewing Investigative Practices

The VPD follows the same investigative process regardless of a victim's race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other identifying factor. This involves thorough investigations for all victims, including crimes against 2SLGBTQQIA people. However, when crimes are motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate towards an identifiable group, they are investigated by the VPD Hate Crime Investigator.²¹ Furthermore, VPD investigators are keenly aware of the unique historical and cultural sensitivities surrounding Indigenous victims and consider those during investigations, both to provide resources for the victim and families, and to aid the investigation.

Overview of the VPD Missing Persons Unit

The CoV, by its location and size within the Greater Vancouver area, holds a unique position; the city is the economic, cultural, and entertainment centre for both the Lower Mainland and the province. This places the VPD in a unique position to investigate more missing person reports than any other municipality in B.C.

The VPD averages over 5,000 missing person reports a year and has a dedicated unit to review, co-ordinate, and investigate all missing person files. The MPU is staffed with eight detectives who review and assess risk in every missing person file initiated in the CoV. When the missing person is not located during the initial investigation conducted by frontline officers, the MPU continues the investigation and retains the file until the missing person is located. The MPU's investigators and civilian coordinator are supervised by a Sergeant who reviews and oversees file management, ensuring provincial and departmental

²¹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 18.12: Police services better investigate crimes against 2SLGBTQQIA people and ensure accountability for investigations and cases involving 2SLGBTQQIA people.*

standards are maintained. From the initial report of a missing person, the VPD applies several review layers and continual risk assessments dependent on varying situational factors. Furthermore, there is an MPU investigator on call at all times.

VPD MPU members continue to provide training to police members in settings such as the JIBC, cycle training, and Sergeant Education programs. As well, training is provided to volunteers at various community police offices (e.g., the Collingwood Community Policing Centre and VACPC) on missing persons issues, and the cultural and historical sensitivities that all persons associated to the policing community would benefit from knowing. The MPU provides training and education to the wider community by speaking to the Citizen's Police Academy. This is facilitated by DIIRS in order to foster an understanding of missing person files. Finally, since 2012, members of the MPU give presentations at the B.C. Missing Persons Centre bi-annual training symposium, Unidentified Human Remains, and Counter Exploitation Training Symposium. They have also presented at the British Columbia Aboriginal Policing Services Annual Training conference.

MPU members have attended MMIWG Inquiry working groups to provide and gain insight into the issues around missing persons and Indigenous Peoples. These meetings have continued to build trust and cooperation on issues that are present or arise between the police and Indigenous Peoples. Members of the MPU have attended training supplied by VPD on cultural sensitivities and historical issues as seen by the Indigenous Peoples themselves. Some MPU members have had the honour of attending sweat lodges and meeting with community Elders to better understand and appreciate the beliefs of the Indigenous Peoples.

Crossing Jurisdictions and Improving Coordination

Like all VPD investigative units, the MPU, follows the same investigative process regardless of any demographic factor. Nonetheless, MPU investigators are also aware of the sensitivities around Indigenous Peoples and missing person investigations. The MPU has worked, and continues to work, on fostering new community partnerships, and maintaining those already established. These community partnerships, both inside and outside of the Indigenous communities are with, but not limited to; outreach workers (e.g., WISH, UNYA, Carnegie, and Covenant House), MCFD, VACFSS, group home staff, supportive housing staff (e.g., Atira Women's Resource Society, and Portland Hotel Society), Canadian Centre for Child Protection, and many others. These partnerships are vital to build trust and work effectively together to shorten the time a person is missing and lessen the likelihood of repeat missing reports on the individual.

Through the VPD Executive, the MPU maintains a relationship with the SisterWatch program; when community members raise concerns, the MPU is promptly made aware of them and works to solve the issue in collaboration with them. The VPD MPU attends meetings and communicates often and effectively with youth outreach workers from Indigenous organizations. Assisted by the VPD's Sex Industry Liaison Officer, the VPD has a positive working relationship with several non-profit groups and organizations both inside and outside DTES.

In June 2015, new provincial legislation, the *British Columbia Missing Persons Act*, came into effect, improving police access to information that could help locate a missing person.^{xliii} This *Act* allows police to apply for court orders to access records or conduct searches, in cases where a criminal offence is not suspected. The *Act* also allows police officers to directly demand access to records in emergency situations.^{xliiv}

The VPD's MPU regularly works with other police jurisdictions in requesting and providing assistance during ongoing investigations. This can range from checking addresses, obtaining video, to interviewing witnesses or family in order to further each jurisdiction's investigations. This assistance is not limited locally or even provincially. For example, the MPU has, over the last several years, kept records of the different areas they have had contact with, either requesting assistance or to provide assistance. In 2018, the MPU had contact with people involved in VPD files in all Canadian provinces and territories, over 30 states in the USA, and 22 foreign countries. The ease in which people are able to move about is a factor that the MPU is highly cognizant of; the need to cooperate with other jurisdictions on a daily basis is paramount to finding missing people.

Crossing boundaries, the VPD also works with the British Columbia Missing Persons Centre (BCMPC) a "provincial force unit that provides guidance and support to all police in the province for missing person investigations, and coordinates and supports unidentified human remains investigations."^{xliv} The VPD MPU works efficiently with the BCMPC, especially in relation to coordination of the DNA and dental databases for Unidentified Human Remains.

The MPU, therefore, works with both government and non-government organizations to cross jurisdictions and improve communication, meeting the recommendation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG to improve coordination.²² These partnerships exist at the CoV, Lower Mainland, provincial, national, and international levels.

Standardization of Protocols

Provincial Policing Standards for Missing Person Investigations

In December 2012, The Honourable Wally T. Oppal released MWCI report, which provided 63 recommendations with 33 directly related to policing.^{xlvi} Among those recommendations, Commissioner Oppal called for improved missing person policies and practices and recommended that provincial standards be developed.

Since 2002, the VPD has improved policies and practices related to missing person investigations, complied with the MWCI recommendations, improved relationships with the

²² *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (iii): Improve coordination across government departments and between jurisdictions and Indigenous communities and police services.*

Indigenous community and contributed to the development of the BCPPS for Missing Person Investigations.^{xlvii} The BCPPS for Missing Person Investigations came into effect on September 1, 2016. The intent of these provincial policing standards is to ensure that all missing person investigations in BC are prioritized and undertaken at a high standard, appropriate to identified risk, and that a consistent approach is maintained throughout the province. The standards and associated guiding principles establish the overall approach to missing person investigations for all B.C. police agencies. The standards recognize the necessity for officer discretion to address the unique needs of each case, with accountability for decisions through supervisory review. These standards guide VPD investigations and jurisdictional responses.

The VPD has carefully reviewed the standards and updated policies and procedures where required to ensure compliance. Given the strides that the VPD has made since 2002, the VPD was well-positioned to assimilate the new standards as many of them were already established within the business practices of the MPU. However, the implementation of a risk assessment template (an investigative aid that assists the initial investigating officer in assessing risk) is an excellent example that resulted from the MWCI recommendations. This template must be completed upon initial contact with the complainant, reviewed by a supervisor, and immediately if any risk is identified, or as soon as practicable otherwise. Another example is the implementation of a checklist of initial investigative steps to ensure consistency and thoroughness of missing person investigations. All VPD police officers now have access to this checklist through the Regulations and Procedures Manual.

The VPD acts in accordance with provincial standards, and all reports, as outlined in BCPPS Section 5.1.1., are accepted at the time they are made and given full consideration and attention regardless of gender, age, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, belief, or lifestyle. Furthermore, there is no length of time an individual needs to wait to be able to report someone as missing. In summary, there should be “no barriers” in reporting someone as missing.

An important issue in all missing persons investigations is the jurisdictional ownership of the file. In other words, determining which department takes the leadership role on a file. The BCPPS sets out the following criteria to determine which police force has jurisdiction in relation to a missing persons report^{xlviii}:

- *The police force for the jurisdiction in which the missing person was last seen is the police force of jurisdiction; or*
- *If the location where the missing person was last seen is not known or their presence there was transient in nature, then the police force for the jurisdiction where the missing person resides or last stayed is the police force of jurisdiction;*
- *If jurisdiction is unclear and cannot be resolved between police forces, the police force contacts the Officer in Charge BC Police Missing Person Centre/designate as soon as practicable, who makes the decision regarding jurisdiction.*

Importantly, VPD officers conduct risk assessments immediately and do not delay pending any questions concerning jurisdiction. Therefore, the VPD, in accordance with provincial standards, views all Indigenous missing person investigations as high risk until the risk assessment is completed. The VPD conducts risk assessments with urgency and without delay; a timely response is critical to the well-being of the missing individuals and to a successful investigation.²³

The VPD acknowledges that Indigenous women and girls are at an increased risk of harm; Indigenous background is considered when determining the appropriate response and resources.

Major Case Management Principles

Provincial standards for consistent investigative approaches across the province have also been created for the management of major crimes. The VPD is compliant with BCPPS 5.2, Major Case Management (MCM) designed to ensure that the police response to a major crime is appropriate to the needs of an investigation while maintaining substantive services to the community.^{xlix} The need for systematic MCM practices and standards was a recommendation made by the MWCI Commission, which recommended that the Provincial Government mandate that MCM be used during all major crime investigations and that provincial standards be established.^l The Commission further recommended that these standards address multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency investigations, and called for the creation of a protocol to support the timely and seamless implementation of multi-agency teams.

The standards identify the required minimum elements of MCM to be applied by all police agencies in B.C. to enhance consistency in investigations and to facilitate cooperation and coordination on multi-jurisdictional investigations. The standards allow the VPD to improve coordination across departments and jurisdictions, as called for in the National Inquiry into MMIWG.²⁴

Standards on Inter-Agency Cooperation and Coordination

The purpose of the B.C. Provincial Policing Standards for Inter-Agency Cooperation and Coordination is to support information-sharing, consistency in practices, and collaboration between all forces in B.C. when conducting investigations involving serious crimes.^{li} These standards also bring B.C. in line with other provinces where compliance with Violent Crime Linkage Analysis (ViCLAS) reporting requirements is mandatory. Underlying principles of the Inter-Agency Cooperation and Coordination standards include:

²³ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (vi) Establish standardized response times to reports of missing Indigenous persons and women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people experiencing violence, and conduct a regular audit of response times to monitor and provide feedback for improvement.*

²⁴ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (iii): Improve coordination across government departments and between jurisdictions and Indigenous communities and police services.*

- public interest is best served when police agencies communicate and work together to identify and pursue common objectives; and
- the power of systems and tools is enhanced when used consistently within and across policing jurisdictions.

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR INCREASINGLY CROSSES JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES. EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SHARING AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN POLICE AGENCIES CAN INCREASE THE ABILITY OF POLICE TO IDENTIFY OFFENDERS AND SOLVE CRIMES, PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES.

Provincial Policing Standards (Inter-Agency Cooperation and Coordination, 5.3)

Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System

ViCLAS is national computer database program created for the collection of information on serial offences. Stemming from a series of complex serial homicides that spanned multiple jurisdictions, law enforcement officers recognized there was the need for a central repository system accessible by all policing agencies.^{lii} In 1991, the RCMP, in collaboration with several other police services, developed and operated the ViCLAS system to track, identify, and compare specific violent or interpersonal crimes and criminals.^{liii} Used as an important investigative tool to identify links between crimes, investigators are able to discover crimes committed by the same offender. Police agencies across Canada contribute to ViCLAS by submitting comprehensive and detailed information booklets about violent, especially sexual, crimes in their jurisdictions. Information from each incident includes all aspects of victimology, modus operandi, forensics, and behavioural patterns. Reportable incidents include but are not limited to homicides, sexual assaults, and missing persons.

In accordance to BCPPS, VPD must comply with the reporting requirements and timelines of ViCLAS.^{liv} VPD provides completed ViCLAS booklets to meet the 30-day compliance deadline. Currently, VPD has a temporary designated compliance officer to complete all the ViCLAS booklets. This practice aims to decrease the administrative burden on patrol officers while increasing VPD's compliance rate. This also increases officers' productivity and ensures the consistency of information provided. Additionally, VPD has a full-time civilian ViCLAS Coordinator who is responsible for collecting and assessing files for completion and following-up with officers when necessary to ensure VPD meets the deadline. The coordinator also serves as the VPD liaison to the ViCLAS specialists of RCMP "E" Division.

Due to the sensitive nature of ViCLAS incidents, some victims do not wish to report an incident to the police.^{lv} Instead, they are able to report to a third party agency such as Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), a rape crisis centre. Staff at WAVAW can fill out an anonymous report where the victim wishes to remain anonymous.

Alternatively, staff can also take reports from a victim's friend or family member, reporting on the victim's behalf. All reports received from WAVAW are completed by VPD's ViCLAS Coordinator and then forwarded to RCMP's "E" Division's specialists.

Real Time Intelligence Centre

The MWCI also recommended the creation of a regional Real Time Crime Centre, scalable to the province.^{vi} The BC Ministry of Justice incorporated this recommendation in the 2013 B.C. Policing and Safety Plan. Established in January 2015, the Real Time Intelligence Centre of B.C. (RTIC-BC) is a centralized data system that provides analysts with multi-jurisdictional records, databases, and other information. The goal is to accelerate serious criminal investigations and investigations of missing persons and locate suspects at the earliest opportunity through information sharing. RTIC-BC delivers real-time operational support to frontline officers and investigators by providing actionable intelligence. The centre operates 24/7 and is accessible by all BC police agencies. RTIC-BC provides real-time situational awareness and a coordinated response, as suggested in the National Inquiry into MMIWG; recognizing that importance, the VPD has seconded a Staff Sergeant, a civilian investigational assistant, and three police officers to RTIC-BC, in full-time capacities.

National Policing with Indigenous Peoples Committee

Also towards enhancing communication between jurisdictions, communities, and police services, the VPD contributes to committee work. For example, with Executive representation, the VPD is an active participant in the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) Policing with Indigenous People's (PWIP) Committee. The mandate of CACP's PWIP Committee is to "Consider matters relating to sustainable policing services and enhanced public safety for Indigenous peoples and their communities throughout Canada."

Its objective include supporting a measured and consistent approach to large-scale protest management, supporting the MMIWG Inquiry and supporting the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP).

The VPD contributed to significant accomplishments achieved in 2017-2018 including:

- supporting the FNPP and the Assembly of First Nations commitment to make community safety and policing a priority in an MOU signed with Canada;
- continuing support of practical and culturally competent training and policing services that Indigenous people support. For example, the RCMP's Eagle Feather Initiative was created in the spirit of reconciliation and community engagement to offer witnesses, victims, suspects, and officers an alternative form of swearing to an oath. Committee members were provided with materials to support implementing similar initiatives in their police services; and
- discussing research that can be used to help Canadian police to become better equipped to address higher incarceration rates for Indigenous populations and

addressing the Calls for Action as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Provincial Policing with Indigenous Peoples Committee

The purpose of the BCACP PWIP Committee is to work collaboratively in sharing best practices regarding Indigenous policing issues and trends to enhance relationships with Indigenous communities. The committee seeks input from the BCACP members to distribute information, and identify and invite subject matter experts to speak with the membership.

Helping the Healing Journey: Improving Communication with Families

Healing is a vital concept in Indigenous culture, bringing together knowledge, spirituality, and ways of restoring connections.^{vi} Necessary for the healing journey is receiving information about a missing and murdered loved one. Families will often have questions about the police investigations, or decisions made by government agencies such as Crown Counsel. Families need to receive timely information.

Improving communication between families and VPD investigators is and will remain a priority, towards the call for justice to improve communication with families.²⁵ VPD investigative units, as described in the following sections, have protocols in place to improve communication with families of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people.²⁶

Family Liaison Roles

Members of the VPD understand that communication is vital with partners and other police services, but most importantly with the families of the missing. When a person is missing, the unknown outcomes and circumstance of the cases are very trying for the family and loved ones. Communication between police and families is vital to ensure loved ones are updated and informed regarding the status of the investigation.

For some families, the particulars of an investigation may bring some calmness to what otherwise is a maelstrom of emotions. The MPU assigns an investigator as the “family liaison” who updates the family on the status of the investigation and planned next steps. This is in accordance with BCPPS on Missing Person Investigations, which require families and reportees to be kept informed on the progress of an investigation.^{lviii}

²⁵ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (ii): Improve communication between police and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from the first report, with regular and ongoing communication throughout the investigation.*

²⁶ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (i): Establish a communication protocol with Indigenous communities to inform them of policies, practices, and programs that make the communities safe.*

The VPD MPU communicates with all families, including Indigenous families, to give them hope, knowledge, and insight into the investigation and to instill confidence that the VPD will continue to work relentlessly to find their family member.

Utilizing FILU

Since 2017, the VPD's MCS has been working with the BC Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU). FILU, a relatively new service for families of MMIWG, helps families access available information about their missing and murdered loved ones from multiple government sources, including police services. FILU is available in every province and territory and builds on the existing victim services frameworks in each region.^{lix}

FILU is designed to be a "one-stop information service" for all families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In addition to working with police, BC FILU works with families to coordinate information gathering from government agencies and services, including Crown Counsel, social services, and FILU offices from across the country.

Although VPD's MCS has worked almost exclusively with BC FILU, they have also received referrals from other FILU offices in Canada. To date MCS has received 14 FILU requests and maintain communication with BC FILU regularly. The majority of the requests are from family members of MMIWG. Most of these requests have been for historic files, with the majority from the family members who want to initiate or re-establish contact with the VPD and receive investigative information surrounding the death or disappearance of their family member. When requested, MCS investigators will meet with family members to review their loved one's file and answer any questions or concerns the family may have. The VPD strives to have these meetings in person and a FILU staff member is also present to assist in providing the information in a compassionate, culturally-sensitive, and trauma-informed manner. Furthermore, VPD's MCS maintains communication with the family members if required and desired by the family, through FILU and/or through assigned family liaisons, as directed by BCPPS.

Finding Ways to Improve Communication with Families

The VPD recognizes that it needs to regularly assess the methods in which investigators communicate with the families of missing and murdered individuals. As such, the VPD is regularly reviewing and developing new processes to ensure that families are kept informed. For example, recently, MCS implemented new procedures to assist in maintaining accurate family contact information, logging all family contacts, and ensuring timely and respectful contact is made. Furthermore, in all new cases, the victims' families are provided contact information for Victim Services and in many cases are introduced to Victim Services personnel.

VPD Victim Services Unit

The VPD's Victim Services Unit follows mandated protocols to refer clients to specific community agencies, several of which are tailored towards Indigenous clients. If a victim of crime self-discloses that they are Indigenous to one of the VPD caseworkers, they are to refer them to Indigenous-focused services such as the Aboriginal Wellness Program, Watari

Youth, Family and Community Services, or Aboriginal Front Door. Referrals are also made to DEWC, Battered Women's Support Services, Women Against Violence Against Women, amongst others who have developed Indigenous culturally-focused support groups. Additionally, clients may be referred to the VACPC or liaise with the NPO at the VACPC.

The Impact of Officer Turnover

For a variety of reasons, investigators may leave sections. For example, often VPD investigators may work in a section for several years and then either seek promotion, or other sections for a new experience. Alternatively, investigators may reach their "tenure level" in a designated position. The VPD Tenure Policy provides the timeframes allowable for members to remain in a position. The policy also provides a structure that creates a level of equity in the workplace. A goal of the Tenure Policy is to provide sworn staff an opportunity to work in varied assignments throughout the organization. Tenure also provides opportunities for career development, promotes succession planning, and creates an atmosphere conducive to the sharing of knowledge and skills between experienced and less experienced staff.

The VPD recognizes that high turnover has the potential to negatively impact an investigation and communication with families. However, the VPD, in line with a recommendation in the MMIWG Inquiry²⁷, has provisions in place to mitigate these potential effects and has succession and transition plans between changes in personnel in a section. First, within the VPD Tenure Policy, extensions may be provided for the investigating officer to remain on the file, if it is in the best interest of the investigation, including if no other investigator has the skills or abilities for the specified assignment. This may include the rapport an investigator has established with families or if the family liaison role would not be suitable for another investigator.

However, in those situations when VPD investigators are transferred in the midst of an investigation they still work within the CoV and can provide investigative continuity. Importantly, VPD officers are not transferred to other cities or outside the province, as may occur with the RCMP. Therefore, if an officer were to be transferred, but has a key role in an investigation (e.g., family liaison), they may still serve in that capacity.

Finally, the VPD is compliant with BCPPS on Missing Person Investigations, which require that the family/reportee be aware of who they should contact so that open lines of communication between police and families are maintained.^{ix}

²⁷ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (iv): Recognize that the high turnover among officers assigned to a missing and murdered Indigenous woman's, girl's, or 2SLGBTQIA person's file may negatively impact both progress on the investigation and relationships with family members; police services must have robust protocols to mitigate these impacts.*

Unresolved Files of MMIWG

A recommendation in the MMIWG Inquiry is for all levels of government, including police services, to establish an independent specialized national task force to review and re-investigate unresolved files of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people.²⁸ The VPD supports this recommendation.

It is noteworthy, that commencing in 2016 and running until 2017, the VPD conducted a review of all unsolved murdered or missing Indigenous women files. This review was initiated before the National Inquiry.

- The VPD has nine unsolved homicide files dating between 1985 to 2002. The VPD has not had a known unsolved homicide involving an Indigenous woman since 2002 or prior to 1985.
- The VPD has 14 unsolved missing Indigenous women files dating between 1978 to 2007. The majority (12) of these files, from 2002 to 2007, were investigated by the joint VPD and RCMP Missing Women's Task Force specifically for Project Evenhanded and Project Amelia. The VPD has not had an unsolved missing Indigenous woman file since 2007 or prior to 1978.

The VPD supports the establishment of a national task force and should it be created, the VPD agrees to voluntarily disclose all unresolved cases of MMIWG, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to this task force.²⁹

Investigative Teams at VPD

The VPD encourages all its police officers to pursue career options that are suitable or of interest to them. Therefore, the VPD cannot assure that all investigations involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are investigated by primary investigators of Indigenous descent.³⁰ However, regardless of the investigation, the VPD does ensure, as outlined in earlier sections, that all major crime investigations and missing person investigations are compliant with provincial policing standards. Furthermore, during investigations involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, VPD investigators engage culturally appropriate resources and victim services, as described

²⁸ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.9: We call upon all levels of government and all police services for the establishment of a national task force, comprised of an independent, highly qualified, and specialized team of investigators, to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from across Canada. Further, this task force must disclose to families and to survivors all non-privileged information and findings.*

²⁹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.10 We call upon all police services to voluntarily produce all unresolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to the national task force.*

³⁰ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.4 (i): Specialized Indigenous policing units are to be staffed with experienced and well-trained Indigenous investigators, who will be the primary investigative teams and officers overseeing the investigation of cases involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.*

earlier (e.g., VACPC, Indigenous Court Support Worker, etc.). This also includes engaging the Indigenous Liaison Officer, Musqueam Liaison Officer, LGBTQ2S+ Liaison, Sex Industry Liaison Officer and/or the Indigenous Liaison and Protocol Officer.

Ensuring Public Trust: Independent Civilian Oversight of the VPD

The VPD prides itself on transparency and regularly provides information about policing to the citizens of Vancouver. The VPD understands that when police investigate themselves, there may be concerns about conflict of interest from the public.^{lxvi} That is, the public may believe that police officers investigating other police officers from the same agency may not be impartial; even if this were not to occur, the perception may undermine public trust.

The VPD recognizes that concept of public trust, does not equate to a unified public; experiences and a range of variables shape and influence perceptions of the police. For example, Indigenous Peoples may not have trust in police given past negative encounters (e.g., the role of police in enforcing Residential Schools).^{lxvii} The history between Indigenous Peoples and police makes police oversight a sensitive issue. In a review on police oversight that had extensive consultation, Indigenous people sensed that filing complaints is ineffective; perceptions were that if complaints were filed about police, they would face retribution, and many felt that oversight bodies were inaccessible.^{lxviii}

The Indigenous people consulted expressed a lack of understanding of the complex system of police oversight. When it comes to oversight in general, many felt that filing complaints is futile, that they would face retribution for filing complaints, that oversight bodies were inaccessible (especially for rural and remote communities), and that treatment from oversight bodies was often inappropriate.

Toward Peace, Harmony, and Well-being: Policing in Indigenous Communities (2019)

The VPD must ensure that police do not engage in criminal behaviour and agrees that where criminal conduct occurs, the law must be applied the same, to police and public alike. In addition, police officers must be held to standard for offenses under the *BC Police Act* and violations of *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.^{lxix} Overall, the VPD is subject to a high degree of civilian oversight and meets the recommendation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG for independent oversight.³¹ Existing mechanisms for independent oversight are described in the following sections.

³¹ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.6: We call upon all police services to establish an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples within their police service. This special investigation unit must be transparent in practice and report at least annually to Indigenous communities, leadership, and people in their jurisdiction.*

Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC) is a civilian, independent office of the Legislature that is responsible for overseeing and monitoring complaints and investigations involving municipal police in BC, including the VPD.^{lxv} The OPCC is responsible for the administration of discipline and proceedings under the *Police Act*. It is the role of the OPCC to ensure, with transparent civilian oversight, that *Police Act* investigations taken by the VPD are conducted with impartiality and fairness, to enhance public confidence.

Independent Investigations Office

Public trust may be tested when a police officer is involved in the death or serious injury of a civilian. The Independent Investigations Office (IIO) of B.C. provides independent civilian oversight to the VPD in these situations.^{lxvi} The IIO is responsible for investigations into incidents of death or serious harm, which may have been the result of a police officer, on duty or off duty. The VPD, under the *Police Act*, must notify the IIO of any incident that falls within its jurisdiction. Undertaking public interest, all IIO investigations are conducted to a criminal law standard, with civilian-led transparency.

BC Human Rights Tribunals

The VPD also maintains oversight through the BC Human Rights Code, which maintains a process, through the BC Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal),^{lxvii} for dealing with complaints of discrimination. The complainant must have a personal characteristic that is protected under the Human Rights code, or be seen to have one. These personal characteristics include, race, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, ancestry, among other protected characteristics.

Civilian Governance: The Vancouver Police Board

Established as an independent and autonomous authority pursuant to the *Police Act*,^{lxviii} the Vancouver Police Board (VPB) is the employer and governing body of the VPD, providing civilian governance and oversight of the VPD. More specifically, the VPB provides governance as the employer of all sworn and civilian VPD staff, service and policy and direction setters, oversees finances, and provides authority for policy and service complaints.^{lxix}

VPB board members are appointed with considerations of diversity and knowledge of communities. Although not a requirement, the VPB, historically and currently, have had Indigenous representation from board members — in line with a recommendation in the National Inquiry into MMIWG to ensure appropriate representation on police boards.³² At the July, 2019 VPB meeting, Wendy John (taxʷtəna:t), a former Chief of the MIB was appointed as a board member. This appointment gives the VPB two Indigenous voices. Claire Marshall, who is Mi'kmaq from the Millbrook First Nation in Nova Scotia, has served on the board since June 2014. Over the years, other members of the Indigenous

³² *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.2 (iii): Ensure appropriate Indigenous representation, including Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, on police services boards and oversight authorities.*

community, including First Nations leader Jerry Adams (a member of the Eagle Clan from the Nisga'a Nation) and Wade Grant (MIB member) have served on the VPB.

Furthermore, in 2018, VPB members received Indigenous Awareness and Indigenous Relations training. Working with the Indigenous Protocol Officer, the VPB is currently planning Indigenous cultural training to be delivered to board members in the fall of 2019. Ensuring that it reaches various communities, the VPB meetings are often held in community. For example, a VPB meeting was held at Musqueam in 2016, and again in September, 2019.

The VPD appreciates the contributions of all VPB members, and the important offerings they make to cultural diversity.

Civil Lawsuits

The VPD is also subject to civil lawsuits that include liability including abuse of public office, negligent investigations, and Charter damages. Everyone is subject to the rule of law and legal oversight allows independent courts to assess police behaviour.

Review of Police Conduct in Criminal Cases

Oversight of police conduct occurs during criminal cases, through the judiciary. Judges review police actions and conduct; their role is to assess whether the Charter, Criminal Code, or case law were violated within the investigation. Through their case decisions, they provide remedies that may be pertain to exclusion of evidence, stays of proceedings, or sentence reductions should be awarded".^{lxx} These court decisions have significant ramifications to police practice.

Public Inquiries and Coroners Inquests

Public inquiries, "the gold standard" of independent review, are high profile and frequently requested for review of police conduct. Governments must order a public inquiry and reserve the right to refuse to appoint them. Coroner's inquests lack the high profile nature of public inquiries but serve an important role in cases of police related-deaths and lead to recommendations regarding police training. All deaths in police custody necessitate a coroner's inquest.

Provincial Oversight

Under the *Police Act* the Policing and Security Branch, a component of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, is responsible for overseeing law enforcement by a variety of functions.^{lxxi} These include developing and coordinating policy and legislation, and as outlined in earlier sections, establishing policing standards. They are also responsible for inspecting the quality of police services, thereby providing an external oversight.

Inspiring Change: Future Directions for the VPD

The VPD is committed to ensuring that police practices are applied judiciously and do not infringe on citizen rights; the VPD will continue to work on initiatives that support this commitment. The VPD also remains dedicated to preventing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The VPD will continue to work on initiatives that support this commitment, as described below.

Continued Education for VPD Officers

The VPD will continue to review its training in an effort to ensure that its police officers are culturally aware and serve the citizens of Vancouver in fair and impartial ways. The VPD will continue to offer the materials from the courses that were detailed in this report (e.g., in the fall of 2019, the VPD will be offering the *Major Case Management* eLearning course).

The VPD Training section will continue to update its courses as required with the perspectives of the National Inquiry into MMIWG (e.g., the 2014 *Sex Work and Workers Awareness* eLearning course will be updated and delivered in the fall of 2019).

Expansion of Trauma Informed Training

Additional trauma informed policing and interviewing training is in the planning stages for delivery in 2020; the VPD's Training section will review the National Inquiry into MMIWG as it applies to course curriculum. It is the VPD's intention to research and evaluate more comprehensively the training that is currently available and/or recommended for police regarding TIP. For example, the Justice, Public Safety and Anti-Violence Community Sectors have embarked in the TIP Project. The TIP Project is a five-year federal Department of Justice funded project, currently in its fourth year. The project is led by a cross-sector Steering Committee including representatives from Crown Counsel, police, corrections, victim services, and programs that work to prevent violence against women.

The TIP program has recently developed and made available an online TIP Foundations Course. The VPD is currently in the process of reviewing this eLearning course. With the current cross-sector online course, there is a concern regarding the volume of material and the potential for redundancy based on what VPD is doing or will be doing from a training perspective. As such, the VPD plans to review the TIP course and design a curriculum specifically for all of our members from frontline to those in investigative sections.

Supporting Calls for Justice at a National Level

The National Inquiry into MMIWG identified Calls for Justice for police services that require cooperation and efforts at a national level. The VPD acknowledges that the efforts must be collective and supports working at a national level towards the shared goal of ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Supporting a Nationwide Emergency Number

The VPD supports the National Inquiry's call for the establishment of a nationwide emergency number and is current working with police services at a national level.³³

Unresolved Files of MMIWG

As outlined earlier, a recommendation in the MMIWG Inquiry was for all levels of government, including police services, to establish an independent specialized national task force to review and re-investigate unresolved files of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people.³⁴ Although the VPD believes that it has exhausted all potential investigative avenues in each of these unsolved files, the VPD welcomes independent file reviews and recommendations on how any of these files can be further advanced. As such, the VPD will be happy to participate in this task force and will provide any of VPD's unresolved cases of MMIWG, and 2SLGBTQQIA, as requested.³⁵

National Strategy to Ensure Consistency in Reporting Mechanisms

The CACP sought and was recognized as a party with standing for the National Inquiry into MMIWG. The CACP attended seven of the nine institutional and expert hearings, submitted oral and closing submissions, and put forward Retired Chief Clive Weighill as a witness for the Police Policies and Practices hearing in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Within the submission, the CACP provided over 20 recommendations ranging from improvements in socio-economic funding by governments, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed missing persons manuals and policies, civilian oversight, and increasing officer knowledge relating to traditional, spiritual and cultural awareness.

³³ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (vii): Lead the provincial and territorial governments to establish a nationwide emergency number.*

³⁴ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.9: We call upon all levels of government and all police services for the establishment of a national task force, comprised of an independent, highly qualified, and specialized team of investigators, to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from across Canada. Further, this task force must disclose to families and to survivors all non-privileged information and findings.*

³⁵ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.10 We call upon all police services to voluntarily produce all unresolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to the national task force.*

The CACP will be responsible for leading a national strategy to ensure consistency in reporting mechanisms for reporting MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA people (as outlined in MMIWG recommendation 9.5 (v)).³⁶ The VPD will be supporting this strategy and will work with CACP towards this important approach.

Funding for Specialized Indigenous Policing Units

A call for justice in the National Inquiry into MMIWG is for adequate funding by the government for specialized Indigenous policing units (within non-Indigenous police services).³⁷ The VPD is supportive of this recommendation for additional funding for DIIRS and other specialized positions tailored for the Indigenous community.

Enhancing Investigative Practices

As described earlier, VPD engages culturally appropriate resources when dealing with investigations of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (e.g., Indigenous Protocol Officer, Indigenous Liaison Officer, 2SLGBTQQIA Liaison Officer, Sex Industry Liaison Worker or the Musqueam Officer). However, the VPD is in the preliminary phases of formalizing the process to ensure engagement and consultation with Indigenous police officers. The VPD agrees that this perspective is important to investigations, opening lines of communication with families, and building trust.

Remaining Dedicated to Build Community Relationships

In addition to the dedicated positions discussed throughout this report, the VPD will continue its commitment to building and sustaining relationships with the local communities and cultures. Members of the VPD will continue to meet regularly with community representatives to develop programming to enhance community safety, and to participate in community forums, workshops, and rallies.

Among other programs, the VPD will continue the SisterWatch program to help ensure that all women are safe from harm and that women feel comfortable reporting crimes to the VPD. The VPD will also continue to build relationships with the 2SLGBTQQIA people and work on programming to ensure the safety of this community. The VPD has made strides with programming such as Safe Place, and will continue to engage community members so that the VPD can serve and protect them.

³⁶ *MMIWG Call for Justice 9.5 (v) Create a national strategy, through the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, to ensure consistency in reporting mechanisms for reporting missing Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This could be developed in conjunction with implementation of a national database.*

³⁷ *MMIWG Recommendation 9.4 (iii): Specialized Indigenous policing units, within non-Indigenous police services, are to be funded adequately by governments.*

Commemorate the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The VPD is working with SisterWatch to create a commemorative House Pole for the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It will be located in the VPD investigative building where the MPU and Homicide units are located.

The VPD House Pole will serve to remember the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This location is also where VPD members are sworn into service and the VPD House Pole will be a guiding foundation for new recruits.

The unveiling of the House Pole is expected in the spring of 2020 and will occur as part of a community traditional Indigenous feast.

Eagle Feather Oath

The VPD is currently exploring the use of a sacred eagle feather as an alternative method of oath taking in swearing-in ceremonies for the VPD's Indigenous recruits. This form of swearing oaths is in practice in a number of legal capacities across Canada, including testimony provided by participants in court processes from police officer to victims, witnesses, and accused persons. As an alternative to the Bible or affirmation, using the eagle feather acknowledges its spiritual significance and rightful place in formal occasions of truth-telling for Indigenous Peoples.

Display Indigenous Artwork

The VPD is looking forward to the unveiling and displaying of a piece of artwork commissioned from Kwantlen First Nation artist Brandon Gabriel. Laminated on red cedar, the central symbolism on the artwork is the Thunderbird, representing transformation and change. Also symbolized is the wolf, representing service to the community and family. The centre of the artwork is the mask dancer, who symbolically removes illness and suffering, while bringing wellness to those who need it. Towards reconciliation and through dialogue with the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee, this artwork will be displayed prominently at the VPD's Court and Detention Services, and is funded by the Vancouver Police Foundation.

Commitment to Continue VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee

The VPD prioritizes the elimination of barriers between police and the Indigenous community and acknowledges that these barriers exist and have existed for too long. Towards building trust with the Indigenous community, the VPD will ensure the continuation of the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee.

In the short time this committee has been established, important steps have already taken place. To ensure this committee is effective and communication flow is improved, the VPD Indigenous Advisory committee will be preparing a year-end report to outline key accomplishments and assessment of the committee's success. This report will provide important insight and allow modifications to be made if necessary. Furthermore, to ensure

that any concerns or issues raised by the committee are not lost, the Chief Constable, along with other members of the VPD Executive commit to remain as members on this committee.

... people in the police department who have tirelessly promoted healthy policing. How the VPD recognized the need to include the Elders and Youth from the Indigenous community...It is the heart and soul that the Indigenous people see and they slowly believe that changes are occurring. The symbols of Indigenous people on the police cars; the Thunder Bird. The inclusion of ceremony from the Coast Salish people and their protocols.

Elder Jerry Adams

VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee Member

Continued Programming for Indigenous Youth

Canada's Indigenous population is increasing; and if "the future of a country is its youth, then Canada's future is increasingly Aboriginal. Canada's Aboriginal youth population is growing at three times the national average."^{lxxii} The literature on the victimization of this growing population is dark — the results of the 2014 GSS revealed that more violent crimes were committed against Indigenous youth than their older counterparts.^{lxxiii} Childhood sexual abuse against Indigenous youth has been found to be prevalent, according to some studies. For example, on average, 25% to 50% of Indigenous women were victims of sexual abuse as children compared to 20% to 25% average within the non-Indigenous population.^{lxxiv}

A comparison of Indigenous children to non-Indigenous children found that 40% of Indigenous people reported being physically or sexually abused before the age of 15 (compared to 29% of non-Indigenous people).^{lxxv} The study found that 14% of Indigenous girls and 5% of Indigenous boys reported being both physically or sexually abused before the age of 15.^F

Further emphasizing the need for proactive measures, there is a correlation between childhood domestic victimization, and subsequent victimization and criminal activity later in life.^{lxxvi} There is an association between the severity of the abuse and the likelihood of the victim becoming involved in juvenile delinquency — this is particularly the case among males.^{lxxvii} In light of these serious findings, and an effort towards preventative programming, the VPD has the several youth-oriented initiatives in place, and programming focused on Indigenous Youth. For example, aimed at Indigenous youth aged 19 to 31, the VPD's Indigenous Cadet Program (ICP) continues to successfully employ two to four Indigenous applicants per cohort, with the focus on promoting employment and career development opportunities for Indigenous Peoples within law enforcement agencies.

Another example, for the past several years, the VPD has been involved in the planning and implementation of the annual Community Celebration Series at Grandview/ᓵuuqinak'uuh Elementary School in Vancouver. Indigenous Peoples represent over 70% of the student population and include Nations such as: Squamish, Musqueam, Tsleil Waututh, Haida, Nisga'a, Cree, Ojibwe, Dakelh, Piapot, Kwakwaka'wakw, Namgis, Kwaqitl, Tsimshian, and Métis.^{lxxviii}

In addition, The Indigenous Liaison works with Native Education College program, to involve practicum students within the DIIRS programming. As a result of these practicum students, the DIIRS women's safety seminar was developed and delivered into community. Further educational opportunities were secured for practicum students, after completion of their program.

Focusing on Indigenous Youth: The Access, Recreation, and Culture Program

In October 2018, VPD's DIIRS launched the first session of the Access, Recreation, and Culture (ARC) Program, which engages high-risk, urban Indigenous youth in cultural and recreational activities, and encourages pro-social behaviours and healthy life choices. The ARC program is intended for youths between the ages of 16 to 24 who may have any combination of the following risk factors: substance use issues; physical and/or mental health concerns; homelessness or lack of stable housing; low socio-economic status and lack of access to resources for survival; poor educational attainment and/or limited employment history; involvement with the criminal justice system; and, social isolation and attachment to negative associates.

The first cohort comprised of eight males aged 15 to 18. They engaged in a series of meaningful seminars designed to introduce them to Indigenous cultural practices as well as key aspects of policing. These seminars included teaching on the Medicine Wheel with Indigenous Elders, Cedar Weaving, Drumming, a guided hike with members of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and field trips to the VPD's Marine Squad and Mounted Squad.

In April 2019, a second cohort, with two females and six males, aged 14 to 20, started the ARC program. To date they have spent an extensive and meaningful session under the guidance of an Indigenous Elder, participated in a field trip with the VPD Marine Unit, and in a coaching session with a member of the VPD Recruiting Unit. Work towards obtaining drivers licences for these participants has already started, along with coaching them towards participation in the VPD's ICP.

An independent review of the program was conducted in January 2019, and the results revealed that the program is being well received and impactful in terms of inspiring youth to continue to work towards a career in the criminal justice system. Further, the review identified a recommendation by the youth to visit the Vancouver Police Museum; this recommendation has been implemented.

Extensive VPD resources are committed to youth engagement, namely through programming that provides positive interactions and nurture relationships, understanding,

and trust between youth and police. Concurrently, these efforts serve to develop self-esteem and positive life skills among youth, while deterring them from engaging in criminal activities such as gang involvement. The VPD will continue these programs, as well as develop new other youth oriented programming.

Conclusion

A collective responsibility to end the systemic causes of violence and increase the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people is required. The VPD accepts the voices in the National Inquiry into MMIWG and will continue taking action to address the concerns raised.

Sexism, racism, stereotypes, and any other discriminatory behaviour does not have a place in the VPD; *all* citizens have the right to feel safe in their communities and all citizens have human rights to be upheld. Efforts are made to ensure that the police officers that comprise the VPD treat people with respect, fairness, and compassion. Once hired, the VPD provides regular training to ensure that VPD officers serve citizens with cultural competence.

The VPD is committed to transparency in its actions and remaining accountable in its service to the public. The VPD respects that its success is inherently reliant upon maintaining, improving, and learning from its existing relationships with the communities it serves.

Glossary

2SLGBTQIA	TWO-SPIRIT, LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, QUESTIONING, INTERSEX AND ASEXUAL
ACC	ABORIGINAL CULTURAL COMPETENCY
ARC	ACCESS RECREATION AND CULTURE
BCACP	BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE
BCMPC	BRITISH COLUMBIA MISSING PERSONS CENTRE
BCPPS	BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL POLICING STANDARDS
CACP	CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE
CISM	CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT
CEU	COUNTER EXPLOITATION UNIT
CoV	CITY OF VANCOUVER
CYAC	CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE
DEWC	DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
DIIRS	DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND INDIGENOUS RELATIONS SECTION
DTES	VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
DVACH	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL HARASSMENT SECTION
FILU	FAMILY INFORMATION LIAISON UNIT
FIP	FAIR AND IMPARTIAL POLICING
FNPP	FIRST NATIONS POLICING PROGRAM
FSGV	FAMILY SERVICES OF GREATER VANCOUVER
GOV	GATHERING OUR VOICES
GSS	GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY
HR	HUMAN RESOURCES
IACP	INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE
ICP	INDIGENOUS CADET PROGRAM
JIBC	JUSTICE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
MCS	MAJOR CRIME SECTION
MCFD	MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
MCM	MAJOR CASE MANAGEMENT
MIB	MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND
MMIWG	NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS
MPU	MISSING PERSONS UNIT
MWCI	MISSING WOMEN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
NPO	NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE OFFICER
OPCC	OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER
PACE	PROSTITUTION ALTERNATIVES COUNSELLING AND EDUCATION SOCIETY
PR&A	PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND AUDIT SECTION
PWIP	POLICING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S
RCMP	ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
RTIC-BC	REAL TIME INTELLIGENCE CENTRE
SCU	SEX CRIMES UNIT
SIS	SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

SMC	SPECIAL MUNICIPAL CONSTABLES
TIP	TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES
UN	UNITED NATIONS
UNYA	URBAN NATIVE YOUTH ASSOCIATION
VACFSS	VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
VACPC	VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICING CENTRE
ViCLAS	VIOLENT CRIME LINKAGE ANALYSIS SYSTEM)
VPB	VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD
VPD	VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
WAVAW	WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
WISH	WOMEN'S INFORMATION AND SAFE HOUSE
WPST	WOMEN'S PERSONAL SAFETY TEAM

Appendices

Appendix A: Calls for Police Services

9.1 We call upon all police services and justice system actors to acknowledge that the historical and current relationship between Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people and the justice system has been largely defined by colonialism, racism, bias, discrimination, and fundamental cultural and societal differences. We further call upon all police services and justice system actors to acknowledge that, going forward, this relationship must be based on respect and understanding, and must be led by, and in partnerships with, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

9.2. We call upon all actors in the justice system, including police services, to build respectful working relationships with Indigenous Peoples by knowing, understanding, and respecting the people they are serving. Initiatives and actions should include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

i) Review and revise all policies, practices, and procedures to ensure service delivery that is culturally appropriate and reflects no bias or racism toward Indigenous Peoples, including victims and survivors of violence.

ii) Establish engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and leadership, including women, Elders, youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from the respective territories and who are resident within a police service's jurisdiction.

iii) Ensure appropriate Indigenous representation, including Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, on police services boards and oversight authorities.

iv) Undertake training and education of all staff and officers so that they understand and implement culturally appropriate and trauma-informed practices, especially when dealing with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

9.3 We call upon all governments to fund an increase in recruitment of Indigenous Peoples to all police services, and for all police services to include representation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, inclusive of diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, within their ranks. This includes measures such as the following:

i) Achieve representative First Nations, Inuit, and Métis diversity and gender diversity within all police services through intensive and specialized recruitment across Canada.

ii) Ensure mandatory Indigenous language capacity within police services.

iii) Ensure that screening of recruits includes testing for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias.

iv) Include the Indigenous community in the recruitment and hiring committees/process.

v) In training recruits, include: history of police in the oppression and genocide of Indigenous Peoples; anti-racism and anti-bias training; and culture and language training. All training must be distinctions-based and relevant to the land and people being served; training must not be pan-Indigenous.

vi) Retain Indigenous officers through relevant employment supports, and offer incentives to Indigenous officers to meet their unique needs as Indigenous officers serving Indigenous communities, to ensure retention and overall health and wellness of the service.

vii) End the practice of limited-duration posts in all police services, and instead implement a policy regarding remote and rural communities focused on building and sustaining a relationship with the local community and cultures. This relationship must be led by, and in partnership with, the Indigenous Peoples living in those remote and rural communities.

9.4 We call upon non-Indigenous police services to ensure they have the capacity and resources to serve and protect Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. We further call upon all non-Indigenous police services to establish specialized Indigenous policing units within their services located in cities and regions with Indigenous populations.

i) Specialized Indigenous policing units are to be staffed with experienced and well-trained Indigenous investigators, who will be the primary investigative teams and officers overseeing the investigation of cases involving Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

ii) Specialized Indigenous policing units are to lead the services' efforts in community liaison work, community relationship building, and community crime-prevention programs within and for Indigenous communities.

iii) Specialized Indigenous policing units, within non-Indigenous police services, are to be funded adequately by governments.

9.5 We call upon all police services for the standardization of protocols for policies and practices that ensure that all cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are thoroughly investigated. This includes the following measures:

i) Establish a communication protocol with Indigenous communities to inform them of policies, practices, and programs that make the communities safe.

ii) Improve communication between police and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from the first report, with regular and ongoing communication throughout the investigation.

iii) Improve coordination across government departments and between jurisdictions and Indigenous communities and police services.

iv) Recognize that the high turnover among officers assigned to a missing and murdered Indigenous woman's, girl's, or 2SLGBTQQIA person's file may negatively impact both progress on the investigation and relationships with family members; police services must have robust protocols to mitigate these impacts.

v) Create a national strategy, through the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, to ensure consistency in reporting mechanisms for reporting missing Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This could be developed in conjunction with implementation of a national database.

vi) Establish standardized response times to reports of missing Indigenous persons and women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people experiencing violence, and conduct a regular audit of response times to monitor and provide feedback for improvement.

vii) Lead the provincial and territorial governments to establish a nationwide emergency number.

9.6 We call upon all police services to establish an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples within their police service. This special investigation unit must be transparent in practice and report at least annually to Indigenous communities, leadership, and people in their jurisdiction.

9.7 We call upon all police services to partner with front-line organizations that work in service delivery, safety, and harm reduction for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to expand and strengthen police services delivery.

9.8 We call upon all police services to establish and engage with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee for each police service or police division, and to establish and engage with a local civilian Indigenous advisory committee to advise the detachment operating within the Indigenous community.

9.9 We call upon all levels of government and all police services for the establishment of a national task force, comprised of an independent, highly qualified, and specialized team of investigators, to review and, if required, to reinvestigate each case of all unresolved files of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from across

Canada. Further, this task force must disclose to families and to survivors all non-privileged information and findings.

9.10 We call upon all police services to voluntarily produce all unresolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people to the national task force.

9.11 We call upon all police services to develop and implement guidelines for the policing of the sex industry in consultation with women engaged in the sex industry, and to create a specific complaints mechanism about police for those in the sex industry.

Appendix B: Additional Calls for Justice Relevant for Police Services

Calls for Justice – Métis - Specific

17.12 We call upon police services to build partnerships with Métis communities, organizations and people to ensure culturally safe access to police services.

17.13 We call upon police services to engage in education about the unique history and needs of Métis communities.

17.14 We call upon police services to establish better communication with Métis communities and populations through representative advisory boards that involve Métis communities and address their needs.

Calls for Justice – 2SLGBTQQIA – Specific

18.12 Police services better investigate crimes against 2SLGBTQQIA people and ensure accountability for investigations and cases involving 2SLGBTQQIA people.

18.13 Police services engage in education regarding 2SLGBTQQIA people to address discrimination, especially homophobia and transphobia.

18.14 Police services take appropriate steps to ensure safety of 2SLGBTQQIA people in the sex industry.

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