
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Justice

Final MWCI report out, work continues on behalf of vulnerable women

VICTORIA – Meaningful investment, collaboration, violence-prevention work, improved policing practices and compensation to the children of the murdered and missing women are hallmarks of government action to date on over 75 per cent of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) recommendations.

Progress on the 56 recommendations directed to the Province is detailed in a final update report released today and available online at: http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public_inquiries/

Government has prioritized those recommendations that support responsive action, such as expanding services, enhancing policy and practice, and increasing service providers' knowledge. This approach has helped to maximize the speed and effectiveness of government's response given the breadth and scope of the recommendations, the most complex of which will take several years to implement.

Highlights of recent work, completed or underway since the initial progress report, include:

- Passing missing persons legislation that will give police needed tools and powers to potentially find people sooner.
- Working closely with the Public Guardian and Trustee to co-ordinate payment of \$50,000 in compensation to each eligible child of the murdered and missing women and provide services and supports as needed.
- Committing \$3.4 million in civil forfeiture grants to supporting vulnerable women – including funds to meet or take further action on seven recommendations related to drop-in and outreach services and awareness and education workshops for sex trade workers, cultural competency training for B.C. police officers, and police-community partnerships.
- On Highway 16, expanding cellphone service along 160 kilometres since 2009, funding enhanced community safety workshops and continuing to invest \$4.5 million annually in northern public transportation options.
- On Highway 16, practical solutions addressing transportation concerns include a new web-based portal that, for the first time, consolidates information on transportation services along the corridor, as well as providing \$75,000 in one-time funding for increased access to education, safe driver, and driver licensing programs for First Nations.
- Striking an expert committee with police, local government and First Nations representatives to look at recommendations related to police structure and funding.
- Continuing to meet with and consult community stakeholders – most recently, on Dec. 2 to gather input on proposed responses to policing-related MWCI recommendations.

The report also addresses current and future action government is committed to taking to

address the broader issue of violence against women in B.C.

Quote:

Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton –

“Creating a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women has been the central goal of our response to the MWCI recommendations. Using them as a catalyst for a collaborative effort between government and many other organizations, we continue to advance the safety of vulnerable women in profound ways.

“By making this work a focus of our government, we are in a much stronger place to protect vulnerable women than we were 15 years ago. We have been able to support bias-free policing and cultural sensitivity training for officers, we have funded additional drop-in and outreach services for women in the sex trade, and we provide millions in annual funding for integrated policing teams that has resulted in improved information sharing and more effective police resourcing.

“We have also brought in new missing persons legislation to give police more tools to find people more quickly, and just this week, ministry staff held a dialogue session in Prince George with a number of First Nations groups, community representatives, police and others on policing-related recommendations coming out of Commissioner Wally Oppal’s report.

“While today’s report provides our final, official update on two years of progress since Commissioner Oppal released his report, I want to be clear that our action on his recommendations will continue. For example, I can tell you that our review of how policing is structured and funded in this province continues.

“As well, I know Transportation Minister Todd Stone and his ministry are continuing to build on the extensive meetings they’ve had with First Nations and community leaders around transportation challenges along the Highway 16 corridor.”

Quick Facts:

- In its report, government has organized actions under four major themes: healing and compensation, improvements to policing, safety for vulnerable women and supports in missing persons investigations.
- Overall, government provides more than \$70 million a year for crime prevention and intervention services, including \$12.4 million for victim service programs, \$16.5 million for violence against women counselling and outreach programs, \$12.3 million for the Crime Victim Assistance Program and \$32 million for transition house services.
- Government invested \$9.9 million in the MWCI, which delivered a six volume, 1,400-page report to government in December 2012 after a two-year inquiry that involved 90 days of public hearings.

Learn More:

To read the Province’s previous November 2013 Status Report on FORSAKEN – The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, see:

http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public_inquiries/docs/BCGovStatusReport.pdf

To visit the new website on transportation services along the Highway 16 corridor, go to:
www.gov.bc.ca/Highway16Corridor

For residents who don't have access to a computer, Service BC offices along Highway 16 can provide access to view the new website.

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