



YUKON ABORIGINAL
WOMEN'S COUNCIL



March 19, 2018

Hon. Sandy Silver
Premier Yukon Territory
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Hon. Jeanie Dendys
Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6



Dear Hon. Silver and Hon. Dendys:

We are writing to express our disappointment and upset about recent changes in how the Women's Directorate will administer funding for Indigenous women's organizations, and to call on the Women's Directorate to increase its core funding for Indigenous women's organizations.

From our perspective, this decision indicates several concerning trends. First, this decision was made unilaterally without any consultation or conversation with the Aboriginal women's organizations doing impactful, grassroots equality and anti-violence work. This is indicative of a colonial, racist approach that has historically characterized government-Indigenous relationships. We are extremely disappointed that the Women's Directorate would cut our funding without consultation or notice, and additionally disappointed that they would attempt to present this decision to us as an improvement.

Second, this reduction in funding is a violation of the Yukon Government's commitment to enhancing the safety and equality of Indigenous women and girls. The Yukon Government has repeatedly acknowledged the severity of inequality and violence faced by Indigenous women in this territory. The importance of these issues is highlighted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and Calls to Action, which acknowledge the disproportionate victimization of Indigenous women and girls. In addition, the TRC calls on all levels of government to commit to the implementation of the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and specifically calls on all levels of government, in

collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible programs for Aboriginal victims of violence.

For 40 years, our Aboriginal Women's organizations has done critical work to promote the safety and well being of Indigenous women in Whitehorse and rural Yukon communities, and to support victims of violence. Despite the inadequacy and insecurity of our funding, our projects have won awards and widespread recognition for their innovation and effectiveness. We operate on an extremely tight budget, with our Executive spending many hours volunteering to improve the lives of our Indigenous Women in the Yukon. We have researched other jurisdictions and how Government supports their Indigenous Women's organization and disappointed that the Yukon fails when it comes to adequately supporting their indigenous women. Much of our valuable time and resources are spent applying for funding and reporting on projects to ensure the ongoing viability of our organization; but all of this directly detracts from the time we can spent doing actual client and community work. Core funding—*adequate* core funding—is a necessity for our organizations.

Again, we are grateful that the Women's Directorate has agreed to shift from a project-based to a core-funding model. However, we call on you to make two additional changes:

- To increase the amount of core funding available for Indigenous women's organizations in the territory to a level of \$200K annually for each of our organizations.
- To ensure that future changes to funding are only done in consultation and conversation with the organizations that the changes will impact.

For In addition, this funding increase would demonstrate that the Yukon Government has truly committed to working collaboratively to address colonial violence, and has adopted the learnings and recommendations from the TRC.

We regret that accepting your current funding offer would only have us acquiescing the colonial treatment of Indigenous Women in the Yukon and thus call for a meeting with both of you on April 17th.

We thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these matters, and look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,



Ann Maje Raider
Executive Director



Doris Anderson
President YAWC



Krista Reid
President WAWC

Cc: Kirsten Madsen, Women's Directorate A/Director