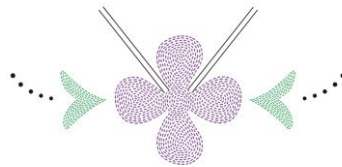


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale  
sur les femmes et les filles  
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process Part II  
Institutional hearings: “Government Services”  
Sheraton Suites Calgary Eau Claire  
Calgary, Alberta**



**Part II Volume V**

**Friday June 1, 2018**

**Panel III: “Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing”**

**Nakuset, Montreal Native Women’s Shelter;**

**Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Alberta);**

**Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra Family  
Assault Support Services (Ontario)**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners  
Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson**

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**Panel III: "Shelters, Safe Houses & Transition Housing"  
(continued)**

Chair: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Second Chair: Marie-Audrey Girard (Commission Counsel)

**Witness: Nakuset, Montreal Native Women's Shelter**

Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

**Witness: Josie Nepinak, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Alberta)**

Counsel: Darrin Blain for Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society

**Witness: Sandra Montour, Executive Director, Ganohkwasra Family  
Assault Support Services (Ontario)**

Counsel: Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners  
Michèle Audette, Brian Eyolfson & Qajaq Robinson

Grandmothers, Elders & Knowledge-keepers: Minnie Amidlak,  
Cynthia Cardinal (National Family Advisory Circle - NFAC), Edmee  
Comstock, Barbara Dumont-Hill (Government of Canada), Spike  
Norton Eagle Speaker, Louise Haulli, Kathy Louis, Myrna Laplante  
(NFAC), Gerald Meguinis, Melanie Morrison (NFAC), Bernie  
Poitras, Sarah Nowrakudluk (NFAC), Gaylene Rain, Audrey Siegl,  
Laureen "Blu" Waters, John Wesley, Alvine Wolfleg, Charlotte  
Wolfrey (NFAC), Waasaanese (Government of Ontario)

Hammer Hill Drummers: Craig First Rider, Clarence Wolfleg Jr,  
Norvin Eagle Speaker & Faron Cody Black Kettle

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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1 Calgary, Alberta

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 8:08 a.m.

3 --- **OPENING CEREMONIES**

4 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** -- Speaker family.

5 If I can say, this is my aunt and my uncle. In Blackfoot  
6 country, amongst my people, we have two, three certain  
7 families, and amongst each and every one of your nations,  
8 you have one or two families that have been outstanding or  
9 have travelled far away. I can honestly say that the Eagle  
10 Speaker family, as my relatives, they have relatives all  
11 over the place. Seattle, Vancouver, Ontario, different  
12 places like that, and they're some of the forthright people  
13 that would help with powwows and all of the like.

14 They're very, very special to us, and -- but  
15 back at home here, Spike and Alvine, they're what we call in  
16 Blackfoot, we call them *Iitskinaiksi*. They're -- they're  
17 members of the Horn Society, and it's a very special society  
18 to our people, and so, just like the lamp here, when we make  
19 a smudge or when they start to pray, they make your words  
20 stronger. And if I can say, Chief Commissioner, when --  
21 when things get going today, when you're visiting your --  
22 your kids or your family, whatever, outside of these  
23 proceedings, you're a normal person, but when you speak in  
24 here, your words become stronger.

25 I was very impressed yesterday by the

1 testimony that was getting put forward, and that was  
2 something. And so when you call Spike and Alvine and our --  
3 and our Elders here to make your words stronger, that's what  
4 the prayer is about, is because today, your words are  
5 stronger. Today, things go down on the docket and go down  
6 on the documents that, here, will help us on what we're  
7 trying to achieve. So thank you again for joining us.

8 But I'll ask the Elders to have us a prayer  
9 and they -- they may stand, but you all, if -- if you stand  
10 when you pray, go ahead and stand, but if you don't stand  
11 when you pray, in Blackfoot country, we don't stand when we  
12 pray, so... But this isn't like the Catholics, so at least  
13 I'm not asking any of you to kneel down, so... All right,  
14 here we go. (Speaking in Native language).

15 **MR. SPIKE EAGLE SPEAKER, MS. ALVINE EAGLE**  
16 **SPEAKER, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK:** (Speaking in Native  
17 language).

18 --- OPENING PRAYER

19 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Hey. Thank you.  
20 Touch your heart when the Elders finish praying. That means  
21 you have -- you've accepted their prayer to your heart. So  
22 anyways, I'm not going to tell you any jokes or things like  
23 that, but I am going to talk about my brother here. This is  
24 Skip, and he's going to sing a song for you all to start the  
25 day. I'll let him pick the song. But there's a funny thing

1 about Skip. He's actually a Blood Indian. I'm from the  
2 Blood Tribe, he's from Siksika, but he's actually a Blood  
3 Indian.

4 You see, 200 years ago, when Indians used to  
5 visit each other, there was a family that came to Siksika,  
6 they had a little boy. His name was Wolf Lake (ph).  
7 Anyways, he was about this age, and they spent the fall time  
8 in Siksika Nation and little Wolf Lake made a friend with  
9 another family in Siksika, so just the way it was in the old  
10 days, they said, "We'll just let them play. We'll go home.  
11 You guys can keep him for the winter." Anyways, little Wolf  
12 Lake ended up getting registered on the band registry in  
13 Siksika, and they assumed he was a member of Siksika Nation,  
14 but he wasn't. He was actually a Blood Indian. So I'm  
15 going to go sing with my brother, and then we'll begin.

16 --- DRUMMING CEREMONY

17 (APPLAUSE)

18 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Oh. Oh, okay. Oh,  
19 we're taking the break. All right. Madam Commissioner, the  
20 floor is yours, so again, enjoy yourself in Calgary and you  
21 can go pay off your layaway clothes plans or whatever you  
22 planned for today and you've got a few minutes.

23 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We'll just  
24 take a five-minute break to settle in.

25 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Five-minute break and

1 then we're going to begin. Commissioners, take it easy on  
2 the witnesses today, please.

3 (LAUGHTER)

4 --- Upon recessing at 8:18 a.m.

5 --- Upon reconvening at 8:25 a.m.

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: Chief Commissioner,  
7 Commissioners. I believe that you would like to start this  
8 morning.

9 --- RULING ON MOTION

10 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank  
11 you. Good morning. This is our ruling on an oral motion  
12 brought by the Director of Criminal Prosecutions for the  
13 Province of Quebec.

14 The motion can be summarized as follows:  
15 The Director seeks to admit into evidence at the hearing  
16 this week a document that outlines Victims Services  
17 available in the Province of Quebec. This document is not  
18 part of an examination or cross-examination of a witness;  
19 however, it is tendered at this hearing during  
20 cross-examination to form part of our record, as there has  
21 not been a witness called who can speak specifically to  
22 Victims Services in Quebec this week.

23 Commission counsel opposes the admission of  
24 the document, and the Commission counsel's argument can be  
25 summarized as follows: that this is not the appropriate

1 time and manner in which to tender such evidence. But  
2 Commission counsel does not oppose the -- or dispute the  
3 relevancy and value of the document's contents.

4 Parties by way of written submissions say  
5 that the document should not be admitted. Others have said  
6 that we should be flexible in the interpretation of the  
7 legal path and our terms of reference. Other parties have  
8 taken no position. And those written submissions will be  
9 marked as the next exhibit, Exhibit 52, please.

10 **--- EXHIBIT NO. 52:**

11 Written submissions by all Parties  
12 with standing re: Admitting  
13 documents into evidence, binder  
14 comprising 12 tabs

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** The issue  
16 on this motion is whether this is the correct time and  
17 place to accept this evidence from the Director of Criminal  
18 Prosecutions for the Province of Quebec. Counsel -- all  
19 counsel in their submissions have referred us to the  
20 following parts of the legal path: specifically Rules 8,  
21 10, 30, and 33. Counsel have also referred to our Terms of  
22 Reference, paragraph H, as well as the general  
23 interpretation and provisions of our Terms of Reference.

24 For the record, we interpret all of these  
25 provisions in a broad and flexible manner. It is

1 important, in our view, to remember the purpose of the  
2 proceedings this week. We are gathered to hear evidence  
3 from witnesses on defined subjects and to receive documents  
4 relevant to their testimony.

5 In the context of these proceedings this  
6 week, in our view, it is appropriate to exercise our  
7 discretion to not accept the document tendered as an  
8 exhibit. However, we do not intend to close the door on  
9 the truth. In our opinion, it would be unfair to parties  
10 and others to accept documents in an ad hoc fashion. There  
11 must be clarity to the process.

12 We will advise parties and Commission  
13 counsel of when and how we will receive documents and  
14 relevant information, aside from those documents entered  
15 into evidence at hearings, and we shall do so by way of a  
16 practice direction within 14 days of today's date.

17 The motion brought by the director of  
18 criminal prosecutions for the Province of Quebec is hereby  
19 dismissed.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Chief  
21 Commissioner, Commissioners. I just wanted to now formally  
22 open us into cross-examination. There are -- there are 14  
23 parties, including Commission counsel, that are seeking to  
24 cross-examine witnesses. And just for the record, and for  
25 those joining us online or watching today, the panel that

1 we are actually cross-examining on, it's the third panel  
2 that was on shelters, safe houses and transition houses,  
3 and we had three witnesses including Nakuset, Sandra  
4 Montour and Josie Nepinak.

5 With that, I would like to call the first  
6 party, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal  
7 Women, who will be represented by agent Sarah Beamish. You  
8 will have 28 minutes on the clock, please. :

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** All right, good morning.  
10 My name is Sarah Beamish, and I'm here acting as agent for  
11 Lisa Weber, who is counsel for Institute for Advancement of  
12 Aboriginal Women.

13 Good morning to the Commissioners, to the  
14 Elders and to the Blackfoot people who are hosting us on  
15 their territory.

16 Before I get into -- into Ms. Weber's  
17 questions, I want to just warn those in the room and those  
18 who are watching online that these questions include some  
19 quite graphic content about violence against Indigenous  
20 women, and so just please be aware of that.

21 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

22 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:**

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So, Ms. Nepinak, I would  
24 like to talk with you more about the manifestation of  
25 violence against Indigenous women. And to contextualize

1 that discussion, I'd like to talk with you about the  
2 horrific case out of Alberta that you mentioned yesterday  
3 involving Cindy Gladue, who bled to death as a result of an  
4 11 centimetre injury to her vagina.

5 In March 2015, the individual accused of  
6 murdering Ms. Gladue was acquitted following a trial by  
7 jury, and it is the trial process that I want to focus on  
8 today with the few minutes that we have.

9 So I believe you would have been provided  
10 with a couple of documents, the first one being a decision  
11 of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Do you have --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'll direct  
14 your attention to that, and it's March 2015 reasons for  
15 judgment of the Honourable Justice Graesser. Now, I  
16 appreciate that you are not a lawyer, but I put this  
17 document to you not for the purpose of providing any legal  
18 opinion, but as a member of the public, as an Indigenous  
19 woman, and as someone who works closely with female victims  
20 of violence.

21 So do you recognize this document?

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I do.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Have you had an  
24 opportunity to review it?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I have.



1                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'd like to  
2 mark this as an exhibit by consent.

3                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

4                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, during the  
5 trial -- sorry.

6                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Court of  
7 Queen's Bench of Alberta decision, Regina and Barton 2015  
8 ABQB 159 is the next exhibit, 53, please.

9                   **--- EXHIBIT NO. 53:**

10                                   Reasons for Judgment (on voir  
11                                   dire), R v Barton, 2015 ABQB 159,  
12                                   March 10, 2015, Docket  
13                                   120294731Q1, Edmonton Registry (13  
14                                   pages)

15                   **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** I think -- good morning  
16 to the Commission. I think that it's worth noting that  
17 it's not the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, it's a  
18 decision, and specifically a voir dire, as to the  
19 admissibility of the severed body parts of Ms. Gladue as  
20 evidence.

21                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yes, thank you.

22                                   So during the trial, an application was made  
23 to tender as evidence Ms. Gladue's preserved pelvis and  
24 reproductive organs. The presiding Justice allowed this  
25 application, resulting in the presentation of Ms. Gladue's

1 body tissue in the courtroom, which was apparently a first  
2 in Canada's judicial history.

3 Within this decision, the position of the  
4 Crown and the defence are summarized. At paragraph 3 of  
5 the decision, Judge Graesser confirms that it was the Crown  
6 that sought to introduce Ms. Gladue's pelvis as evidence,  
7 and we see at paragraph 7 of the decision that the defence  
8 opposed this application and that photographs of Ms.  
9 Gladue's injured body parts were available to be  
10 considered, and that an expert witness had provided  
11 testimony about the nature of the injuries to Ms. Gladue.

12 I want to draw your attention to the points  
13 on page 4 of the decision. So on this page, Justice  
14 Graesser writes: (As Read)

15 The photographs are graphic and  
16 unpleasant to view. The tissue is not  
17 particularly recognizable as female  
18 genitalia because of the manner in which  
19 it has been preserved. The presentation  
20 using the tissue was very respectful and  
21 inoffensive, and the initial shock or  
22 revulsion subsided very quickly. The  
23 use of portions of a victim's body as  
24 evidence at trial is novel.

25 After his analysis, the judge decided that

1 Ms. Gladue's actual body parts could be presented as  
2 evidence in this trial.

3 So, Ms. Nepinak, my questions to you, would  
4 you agree that the effect of introducing Cindy Gladue's  
5 preserved pelvis into the courtroom, the manner in which it  
6 was presented and discussed, dehumanized Ms. Gladue?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that  
9 these actions were a violation of basic fundamental  
10 Indigenous beliefs?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** If I were to tell you  
13 that Ms. Gladue's mother was in court when her daughter's  
14 preserved pelvis, including her reproductive organs, were  
15 introduced and that she was not even aware that her  
16 daughter's body parts were going to be presented in court  
17 on the day in the manner that occurred, would you consider  
18 these acts to be manifestations of violence against  
19 Indigenous women?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, extremely, yes.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** The fact that criminal  
22 law rules of admissibility of evidence allow for this to  
23 have happened, and by implication that it could happen  
24 again now that a precedent has been set, is this also a  
25 manifestation of violence against Indigenous women?

1           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Certainly, yes.

2           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** I have also provided  
3 another document, do you have that one before you? It's an  
4 opinion article published by the Globe and Mail in March  
5 2015 following the Court's decision in this case.

6           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

7           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Can we please  
8 mark this article as an exhibit on consent?

9           **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** By  
10 consent?

11           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yes.

12           **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** The Cindy  
13 Gladue Case Sends a Chilling Message to Indigenous Women  
14 article to the Globe and Mail is Exhibit 54, please.

15           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Thank you.

16       **--- EXHIBIT NO. 54:**

17                           "Cindy Gladue case sends a  
18                           chilling message to indigenous  
19                           women," by Sarah Hunt and Naomi  
20                           Sayers, Globe and Mail, published  
21                           March 25, 2015, updated April 23,  
22                           2017 (two pages)

23           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Ms. Nepinak, are you  
24 familiar with this article?

25           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I am.

1                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Can you talk about the  
2 awareness in your province about this case, including this  
3 issue about the introduction of Ms. Gladue's body parts  
4 into evidence?

5                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I would have to say that  
6 this issue has been paramount in some of the advocacy work  
7 that we have done provincially, and the horrific  
8 way -- manner in which Ms. Gladue and her family and her  
9 children have been violated by the very system.

10                   The courts that are intended to protect her  
11 have dehumanized her and have sent a message to -- to  
12 Indigenous women, but to all women in general, that who you  
13 are as a whole person does not matter, at least in the eyes  
14 of -- of this case, where her body parts were cut out  
15 to -- in a -- in a paper -- in a paper plate covered with a  
16 napkin shown publicly without her family's knowledge or  
17 consent is a horrific form of systemic abuse towards women.  
18 And if this case goes forward, the precedent, again, no  
19 woman is going to be immune to that in Canada. We're all  
20 at risk.

21                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'd like to just  
22 read you a couple lines from this article that's before  
23 you: (As Read)

24                   The details of trial indicate how  
25 mechanisms within the justice system can

1 be used to normalize violence against  
2 Indigenous women. The jury has sent a  
3 message that killing an Indigenous woman  
4 is acceptable. How many more deaths  
5 will it take before the system is  
6 compelled to change?

7 Would you say that these lines from the  
8 opinion piece are reflective of the reaction of women  
9 across Canada --

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** -- to the way in which  
12 Ms. Gladue's body parts were presented as evidence?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, yes.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** I will have just a few  
15 more questions for you, Ms. Nepinak, but I would like to  
16 give a chance to the other witnesses to add their thoughts  
17 about the reaction to this evidence being used in court  
18 this way.

19 **JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**

20 **Affirmed:**

21 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAMISH:**

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Maybe, Nakuset, you  
23 could go first and then Ms. Montour.

24 **NAKUSET:** At Six Nations, we had a strong  
25 reaction to this. The women had gathered in a protest.

1 I -- I believe it was a complete violation, exploitation of  
2 women, of Indigenous women, an exploitation of Ms. Gladue's  
3 body, a violation of our sacred -- sacred beliefs around how  
4 we are to treat our -- our bodies after deceased. I believe  
5 it was a complete violation of our beliefs. There was a  
6 very strong reaction.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And, Nakuset, do  
8 you have anything you want to add?

9 **NAKUSET:** It is so disrespectful on so many  
10 levels, it's -- it's like I have no words. Like, the  
11 system has to be better than this, and I think that the  
12 community members, non-Indigenous, also need to step up  
13 because, you know, what you had just read, you get a visual  
14 of it. And just total disrespect. So I hope that  
15 something better comes out of this, and I hope that the  
16 people that were involved in this are held accountable.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Nepinak,  
18 would you support the following recommendation to the  
19 Commissioners: That all provincial and territorial Crown  
20 prosecutors and provincial and superior court judges  
21 complete mandatory training on the human response to sexual  
22 assault victimization, including a component addressing the  
23 unique circumstances pertaining to Indigenous victims, with  
24 such educational programs to be developed in consultation  
25 with the appropriate Indigenous representatives or

1 agencies?

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you  
4 support this recommendation to the Commissioners, that  
5 government agencies such as Crown prosecutions in the  
6 provinces and territories conduct mandatory reviews of  
7 existing processes and procedures with a view to reducing  
8 systemic discrimination and prejudicial policies which may  
9 violate the rights and beliefs of Indigenous peoples?

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour,  
12 would you also support those recommendations?

13 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And, Nakuset, would you  
15 also support those recommendations?

16 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. All right. I  
18 will close off the questioning on that -- on that awful  
19 story. And I'd like to ask you all another question now.

20 So I'll start with -- with you again,  
21 Ms. Nepinak. Are there Indigenous women on your shelter  
22 waiting lists who are getting lost in the shuffle and  
23 ending up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute  
24 this directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Could you repeat that,



1 please? I -- I just didn't hear it quite clearly.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure.

3 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And sorry, just a note  
4 for the audio-visual people. I think we're having a hard  
5 time hearing up here.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

7 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** I know that Josie and I  
8 are having a hard time hearing. So if there's anything  
9 that can be done from the technology perspective -- I know  
10 we can put our earphones on, but we're just having a hard  
11 time hearing compared to yesterday.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Do you want  
13 me -- should I speak this close to the microphone?

14 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** We'll leave it in the  
15 good hands of the tech people. Go ahead, Sarah.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. So to ask  
17 you again, Josie, are there Indigenous women on your  
18 shelter waiting list getting lost in the shuffle and ending  
19 up missing or murdered, and if so, can you attribute this  
20 directly to the absence of sufficient funding?

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. At -- at  
22 any given time, we have 32 beds, and of the 32 beds, we  
23 have seven bedrooms. So you can imagine some of the  
24 bedrooms have five -- five beds. And -- and it depends on  
25 the makeup of the family that come into the lodge. If

1       there's a large family, then that takes up two rooms. And  
2       so for the women who are unable to come into the shelter  
3       and we have to turn them away or refer them to  
4       other -- other agencies, then quite often they make that  
5       choice not to go. And, yes, we have heard of instances  
6       where they have fallen through the cracks, and that  
7       unfortunately, some of them have passed away.

8                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I'd like to  
9       give the other two witnesses also a chance to respond to  
10      that same question. Ms. Montour, can you answer that  
11      question, as well?

12                   **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes. That -- I -- I  
13      believe that is true. When people come and they're  
14      on -- and they're on -- put on a waiting list, they  
15      disappear. And I don't know what happens to them. We  
16      don't know what happens to them. They could be missing,  
17      and they could be murdered. So I believe that that  
18      definitely is true.

19                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And Nakuset?

20                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah, ask the question again?

21                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Sure. Are there any  
22      Indigenous women on your shelter waiting list getting lost  
23      in the shuffle and ending up missing or murdered, and if  
24      so, can you attribute this directly to the absence of  
25      sufficient funding?

1           **NAKUSET:** Okay. So at the Native Women's  
2 Shelter, we also have outreach services. So the women that  
3 can't get into the shelter can call Jessica, our Iskwei  
4 worker, or Tilly (ph), our outreach worker, or David Crane,  
5 who works at Cabot Square. He's our outreach worker who  
6 works with men and women.

7           But I think it's two things. I think it's  
8 lack of funding and lack of "I don't care" because, you  
9 know, Jessica can work with a woman who has been violently  
10 raped, kidnapped, and she brings them to the police. And  
11 then they tell her, "Well, it's going to take, you know,  
12 um, two months before you get processed." Where is she  
13 going to be in two months? You can't guarantee she's going  
14 to come back in two months. The population that we work  
15 with are usually homeless.

16           And what we are asking for is we want our  
17 own Indigenous -- either, like, a liaison officer or  
18 someone who works in sex crimes that can -- we can call  
19 them immediately. You know what else they do in Montreal?  
20 If you get raped, they send you all the way across town.  
21 They only have one centre where they'll process it. And  
22 the whole system is so -- mmm -- difficult. They don't  
23 want to interview the women if they, you know, had  
24 something to drink. So they have to wait until she's  
25 sober. That could take a while. They won't allow Jessica

1 to sit with them, but Jessica is a warrior, so she makes  
2 sure that she's there to do it.

3 It's like the system is made up so that we  
4 fail. And if we don't create our own programs, then  
5 everything will continue. So, yes, lack of funding,  
6 because it took us two years to get money for the Iskweu  
7 project, but also lack of "I really don't care."

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

9 **NAKUSET:** Does that make sense? Lack of "I  
10 don't care."

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So those are all  
12 the questions that I have on behalf of this party. So  
13 I -- we can maybe move on to --

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. And  
15 so -- sorry. We'll stop the time here so it can be  
16 recorded. Just -- Commissioners, so you're aware, the  
17 Independent First Nation which Sarah is counsel for has  
18 23.5 minutes. However, on -- on consent, there's no  
19 objections from any parties in the room that Mr. Darrin  
20 Blain is going to give his 19 minutes, as well, to the  
21 Independent First Nation. And I'm sorry. I just got the  
22 notes, and I haven't done the math yet. So ...

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So I'm just waiting for  
24 the clock to be set. Okay.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, yes. And I was

1 just --

2 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- doing quick math.

4 Sorry. It took me --

5 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Sure.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Oh, and,

7 Ms. Registrar, please confirm I do have the correct time,

8 which would be 32.5 minutes before we start the clock?

9 Yes? So the Independent First Nation -- Nations will have

10 32.5 minutes. And so the clock will reset.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 42.5 minutes?

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sorry. 42. I'm

13 sorry. 42.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. Okay.

15 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: And just before you get

16 going, Ms. Beamish, for the sound people, it's -- I think

17 it's sounding better up here, and I think the problem has

18 been resolved. Thank you.

19 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: All right. So hello

20 again. I'm now representing Independent First Nations,

21 which is a group of 12 --

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: One -- one second.

23 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Sorry.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just want to get

25 to the 30 seconds. You've got an extra 30 seconds.

1                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Oh, okay. Sure. I'd  
2 love my extra 30 seconds. Thank you.

3                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you.

4                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. All right. So  
5 I'm now representing the Independent First Nations in  
6 Ontario, and this is a group of 12 unaffiliated  
7 Hodinohso:ni and Anishinaabe and Oji-Cree nations. And  
8 each of these nations has lost women to violence, most  
9 recently, 23-year-old April Carpenter.

10                   So I have many questions for all of you, and  
11 for the sake of time, at some points I might direct this  
12 question to just one or the other of you, but I think that  
13 all of you would have strong answers to any of them. So if  
14 you have a really burning point you want to add to someone's  
15 answer, you can feel free to indicate that to me. And for  
16 brevity and given the focus of this Inquiry, I will often  
17 refer to Indigenous women in these questions, but I  
18 encourage you to think also about the other people who use  
19 your shelters, in particular two-spirit people. And if  
20 there's something that you feel you need to add, given those  
21 thoughts, please do so.

22                   Now, at a few points in my questioning, I --  
23 I might like to refer to the UN Declaration on the Rights of  
24 Indigenous Peoples, or the UNDRIP, which sets out the  
25 minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being of

1 Indigenous Peoples. Are each of you familiar with the  
2 UNDRIP and comfortable with me referring to it?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

5 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So my  
7 first question is for Ms. Montour, about the issue of  
8 security. You spoke about security risks to shelter staff,  
9 and the need for adequate staffing levels at shelters. I'm  
10 wondering what other things shelters need to ensure the  
11 security of the staff and the people who are using the  
12 shelter? And I'm thinking about both equipment-type things,  
13 like cameras or fortified doors, and things like training  
14 guards, things like that. Can you speak more about -- about  
15 what's necessary to keep people safe in these shelters?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. Definitely  
17 a secure infrastructure. An alarm on the door; a buzzer on  
18 the door allowing people to come in or, you know, allowing  
19 people out; cameras, a secure camera system; staff should  
20 also have a panic button, I'll be wearing a panic button,  
21 especially if staff are single staff, which most staff are.  
22 They should be wearing their panic buttons. There should  
23 definitely be training on, you know, de-escalating (ph)  
24 high-risk situations. How to do that through talking, and  
25 how to de-escalate high-risk cases. There should be

1 training specific on a lock-zone, how to -- and -- how to --  
2 how to work with individuals who are medicated or perhaps  
3 injecting Naloxone if they have to, or using the smelling --  
4 the stuff that you -- through -- put through the nasals.

5 Definitely training on any kind of -- there  
6 should also be, like, a safety -- staff should also have,  
7 like, a training, or the policy should be set for really  
8 high-risk cases. So how to -- for example, for staff, how  
9 to monitor each other when they leave the parking lot.  
10 Perhaps, it's even setting up with your victim services or  
11 your police services, eyes-on, or some sort of an alert  
12 button that'll, through satellite, can track the staff.

13 Sometimes staff get threatened. And so in  
14 those situations, like a partner might threaten that staff,  
15 the partner that might be -- they know the -- their partner  
16 is in the shelter, so they might threaten that staff. So  
17 that staff could -- could have that panic button that  
18 through satellite, the police could track if -- when this  
19 person is going home, things like that.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Safety planning, a lot  
22 of safety planning with staff around even going home, and  
23 not to let anybody pull you off the road, and where -- and  
24 how you're going to plan if you -- if somebody does. Where  
25 are you going to stop? The houses you're going to stop on



1 the way home. So really, extensive safety planning with  
2 staff.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Right.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** To keep safe.

5 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. It sounds like  
6 this can be a dangerous role.

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It is a very dangerous  
8 role, it can be for sure.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. Would you say that  
10 Indigenous shelters typically receive adequate funding to  
11 ensure that they can meet all these security needs?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No, they don't get  
13 adequate funding.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you recommend that  
17 governments guarantee specific funding for essential  
18 security needs at -- at shelters, safehouses, and  
19 transitional housing?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

21 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'd also like to  
22 ask you about -- about maintenance and operations at  
23 shelters -- Indigenous shelters. Would you say that the  
24 typical Indigenous shelter space is in a good state of  
25 repair, or is it common for such shelters to have unmet

1 maintenance needs?

2 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** So as you're asking that  
3 question, I think of the ministry funded shelters, and I  
4 think of the INAC funded shelters and the AHWS funded  
5 shelters. And -- and, I think, amongst our Ontario  
6 shelters, we tend to think that the ministry funded shelters  
7 are more -- are more secure because there is infrastructure  
8 dollars that we can regularly apply for to up -- upkeep our  
9 shelters in terms of maintenance and -- and infrastructure.  
10 Whereas, with INAC funded shelters, that isn't there.  
11 However, there is programs through Canada Mortgage and  
12 Housing, CMHC, that we can apply for. But that is -- I've  
13 -- I've, kind of, heard that that -- that is not as  
14 reliable. I guess, that isn't there as -- as regularly as  
15 the ministry infrastructure funding. So I don't -- it  
16 depends on who you get funding for -- from, that, I think,  
17 the state of your building, I really do. It's unfortunate  
18 that it's that way, but it really does depend on who your --  
19 one of your -- primary funding comes from.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So would you  
21 recommend that governments ensure equitable, sufficient, and  
22 dedicated funding for basic maintenance standards in all  
23 Indigenous shelters?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So my next

1 questions are for Nakuset. And they're about data. So  
2 all -- all three of you yesterday, in your -- in your  
3 testimony and materials had talked about shelter staff  
4 collecting data and statistics related to the people who use  
5 shelters. I think this is a very important function, and  
6 I'd like to better understand some of the challenges in this  
7 area and how shelters could be better supported.

8 So, Nakuset, would you agree that high-  
9 quality data collection by shelters is important for  
10 tracking, understanding, healing, and preventing violence  
11 against Indigenous women?

12 **NAKUSET:** Yes. At the shelter, when we  
13 collect data, there's probably a, maybe, 12 to 14-page  
14 intake that we do. So it's -- it's everything. It's really  
15 wholistic. We have a healing plan for each woman to find  
16 out how we can best serve them.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in your  
18 experience, do the shelter staff doing this data-related  
19 work, in your shelter and in other shelters that you're  
20 aware of, do they generally have special education or  
21 training in data collection and management?

22 **NAKUSET:** Well, in Quebec, through Quebec  
23 Native Women, there's a program called the *promotion de non-*  
24 *violence*, and she coordinates all the Native women's  
25 shelters in Quebec, and I don't know, maybe eight or nine

1 years ago, we actually created a tool-kit from every single  
2 shelter on their intakes, on their healing plans. That was,  
3 you know, with the medicine wheel, and that is how  
4 we -- we work together, is to share our own tools. And we  
5 keep it in the office, and then whenever our staff, you  
6 know, a woman comes in with a particular issue, we have a  
7 multitude of papers to refer to, to best help her.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. In your  
9 experience, do shelters generally have adequate data  
10 management systems or software to support in this work?

11 **NAKUSET:** I -- in Quebec, there's only two  
12 shelters that are off reserve. I know the ones that are on  
13 reserve have less funding. And I don't know exactly what  
14 their databases are like. I think that if you're off  
15 shelter [sic], you have better access to different  
16 programming. So money is always an issue.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So it sounds to me, from  
18 your answer, that there's certainly no -- no guarantee that  
19 shelters would have adequate software and tools for this?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. It's -- that's -- I can only  
21 speak for what I know. And at our shelter, we do have  
22 databases. I've been there for 20 years. I think we got a  
23 new system in, probably, five years ago; otherwise, it was  
24 pretty much just paperwork, files, but no computer software.  
25 Now, we can just type in a woman's name and we have a very

1 clear picture of how many times she used the shelter in the  
2 last, I think, five to seven years.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. I'm glad to hear  
4 that. In your experience, does shelters and shelter staff  
5 have adequate opportunities and means to collaborate with  
6 one another and learn from one another's experiences with  
7 data collection and management?

8 **NAKUSET:** No.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you  
10 recommend that -- that governments ensure that shelters  
11 receive -- all shelters receive adequate training, funding,  
12 and tools to support high-quality data collection and  
13 management?

14 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. The thing is that,  
15 when a woman comes in and she's in crisis, you're wanting to  
16 help her. You're not necessarily wanting to collect data on  
17 her. So we sort of go with what the presenting issue is,  
18 and then later on, you know, we do the collection of  
19 information, and, you know -- and when we're full, it gets  
20 rough. So if there is a certain funding where they can  
21 bring someone else in to -- I'd like to say on a quiet day,  
22 but, you know, we're open 24/7. I'm not exactly sure.  
23 Maybe three o'clock in the morning might be quiet, but I  
24 don't know how many staff are going to be around. We don't  
25 -- we always have staff at the shelter, but not the full

1 staff at three.

2 So I think that's also another -- it's  
3 another problem. I understand that we need the data in  
4 order to get more funding, that our governments really like  
5 to see numbers, but we are more interested in helping and  
6 supporting each individual that walks through our doors.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Actually, my next  
8 question is about staff, and it's for you, Ms. Nepinak.  
9 Would you say that trauma and burnout are significant issues  
10 for Indigenous shelter staff?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. Quite --  
12 quite often, we have staff who -- who have the lived  
13 experiences coupled with the education to -- to do the work,  
14 and there is a lot of precarious trauma that happens as  
15 well. I think with -- with Indigenous staff, we're all  
16 staff that work in the shelter, is we wear our hearts on our  
17 sleeve, and -- and so everyone that comes into the healing  
18 lodge is -- is considered a family member. And so with  
19 that, we -- why -- why we do case management and we do  
20 safety planning and -- and we do the referrals and child  
21 support, et cetera, et cetera, we -- we -- we embrace that  
22 woman wholly and we -- we try to work with her and treat her  
23 as one of our family members.

24 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So that is -- there is a  
25 high burnout rate?

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

2                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And -- and acknowledging  
3 that, you know, most shelter staff are there because they  
4 -- they love the people and care about the work, would you  
5 say that -- that these issues of trauma and burnout  
6 nevertheless affect the quality of services that -- that  
7 shelters can provide to the people using them?

8                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. Absolutely  
9 does happen, and we see more frequent illnesses, perhaps  
10 some depression as well. And quite often, women who work in  
11 the shelter are looking after other family members at home  
12 as well, so there's very little time for these women to --  
13 to do their own self-care and their nurturing. And so at  
14 our lodge, we have our -- our Elders program is part of our  
15 -- part of our program to look after staff as well, where  
16 they have access to ceremony and -- and cultural -- cultural  
17 healing as well -- as well as an employee assistance  
18 program. And I think it's important for any manager to  
19 recognize when staff are burning out and to -- and to pay  
20 attention to that and to offer some alternatives to -- to  
21 maybe taking a day off, to having them do other duties.  
22 That care is so critical.

23                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you say,  
24 based on what you know of -- of other shelters, would you  
25 say that most Indigenous shelter staff would have adequate

1 funding to allow them to -- to get supports like counseling,  
2 Elder support, ceremony, that kind of thing, or are there  
3 major gaps in that area?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** There are some huge gaps  
5 in that area, and no, there is not enough funding to do  
6 that. These women are our fire-keepers in the community,  
7 and so we need to ensure that they are -- that they are  
8 healthy emotionally and -- and physically and  
9 psychologically because they -- they take on so much of the  
10 -- of the -- the trauma that the women are coming in with.

11 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And so would you  
12 support a recommendation that funding for those types of  
13 services be considered an important part of overall staffing  
14 funding in shelters?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. My next  
17 question is also about shelter staff, and it's for you  
18 again, Nakuset. So yesterday, you spoke about -- about the  
19 problem of many Indigenous shelter staff receiving much  
20 lower salaries than -- than shelter staff in -- in non-  
21 Indigenous shelters. You don't need to go into specifics,  
22 but can you talk roughly about the -- the -- this sort of  
23 difference that we're talking about here?

24 **NAKUSET:** I was having a conversation with my  
25 clinical co-ordinator and we were talking about how much we



1 pay our addictions worker, and then we talked about another  
2 addictions centre that paid \$25 more.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Per hour?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yes, they're shocked. You know,  
5 you kind of think you're in the wrong business, but I love  
6 my job and I would never leave it, but it's crazy how much  
7 other people get. If you look at what executive directors  
8 make in the city, like, I'm on the bottom. But, you know,  
9 again, I don't do it for the money and I do it because it's  
10 an honour to do the work. However, I think that we need to  
11 be -- we, the shelter workers across Canada, the Indigenous  
12 ones especially, because of colonization and everything that  
13 we've been through, that the government should be putting us  
14 on a priority list. You know, they talk about  
15 reconciliation, and then they don't give us as much money.  
16 They talk about, you know, the Aboriginal Healing  
17 Foundation, and then after, you know, whatever, was it eight  
18 years, they cut it. You know, it's like we just start the  
19 healing and then it stops, the funding. So I think that  
20 would be a great priority for the government to really  
21 support the ones that are doing the work.

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So on that note, would  
23 you -- would -- was it -- is it fair to say that, within the  
24 shelter system, Indigenous shelters tend to employ more  
25 Indigenous staff and non-Indigenous -- mainstream shelters



1                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Just the whole shelter  
2 system as you know it. Or you can't speak to this question,  
3 or...

4                   **NAKUSET:** I -- okay. So like I said, in  
5 Quebec, there's, you know, a couple of shelters that I know,  
6 there's about 12 or 14 Aboriginal Native women's shelters.  
7 When they're on-reserve, they're always staffed by  
8 Indigenous people. I'm off-reserve. I would have to ask  
9 Maison Missinak how many non-Indigenous staff they have. I  
10 mean, I know the two women in charge are both Indigenous.  
11 You know, we've been around for, you know, 30 years, we  
12 haven't always been Indigenous, but we want to hire our own  
13 people. We just also need to have those that have the --  
14 the proper qualifications.

15                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. Okay. So I guess,  
16 taking -- taking into account your answer that -- that, for  
17 the on-reserve Indigenous shelters, those staff would  
18 generally be Indigenous employees, would you say that it's  
19 your impression that the -- the pay difference between  
20 Indigenous shelter staff and mainstream shelter staff would  
21 be an issue of -- would be something that is  
22 disproportionately hurting Indigenous staff? If I  
23 understand that correctly?

24                   **NAKUSET:** Yes, thanks. Are you saying the  
25 non-Indigenous shelters are getting paid more than the

1 Indigenous shelters?

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah.

3 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, yeah.

4 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So I know that you  
5 -- you can't give a legal opinion here, but would you say  
6 that the pay difference in the shelter system between the  
7 Indigenous shelters and the mainstream shelters is one that  
8 should be viewed as an issue of potential discrimination  
9 against Indigenous people?

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. At the same time, I think  
11 it's pretty much across the board in every position, right?  
12 But yeah, when I hear about what other directors are making,  
13 I'm always shocked. I'm like, "What?" What? Sorry.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah. I mean, I -- we  
15 certainly don't want to give the impression that any shelter  
16 staff anywhere are probably getting paid what they deserve  
17 but -- but -- okay. Thank you.

18 So I'd like to move on to talking about child  
19 welfare, and I'll ask my questions to you, Ms. Montour. So  
20 you spoke yesterday about the shelter staff's duty to report  
21 child protection concerns as being a major barrier to  
22 Indigenous women accessing shelter services, and you  
23 described that one unintended consequence of the duty to  
24 report is that sometimes women won't actually seek out the  
25 help that they need because they're scared of a -- of a

1 Child Services intervention in their lives.

2 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

3 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: So in your role, would  
4 you say that you frequently see the impacts of the child  
5 welfare system on Indigenous children and families?

6 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

7 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: And would you agree that  
8 even where there are legitimate protection concerns,  
9 intervention by a child welfare agency in the lives of  
10 Indigenous families is inherently harmful?

11 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can't say that across  
12 the board. I can't say that for -- for all those cases. I  
13 can't say that, no.

14 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Okay.

15 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can say that our hope  
16 with those collaboration agreements is that -- that  
17 we -- we're working together for the betterment of that  
18 family. What happens is child protection, their focus is  
19 the child, but the shelter, our focus is the family. So  
20 that's why we often bump heads.

21 But if we follow those collaboration  
22 agreements, they are meant to make a smooth transition for  
23 the betterment of the family, but often that does not  
24 happen.

25 MS. SARAH BEAMISH: Would you say that it's

1 a mistake to consider the wellbeing of the child as a  
2 separate thing from the wellbeing of the child's family?  
3 That these things are related?

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I think they're  
5 related. It's hard for me to think like that because  
6 I'm -- my philosophy on life and just how I was raised,  
7 it's about the family. So it's -- that's a different -- to  
8 me that's a different way of viewing the family.

9 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** So going back to what  
10 you had said yesterday about women sometimes not seeking  
11 the care that they need because of this risk, would you say  
12 that when Indigenous women do not get the help that they  
13 need because they're concerned about child welfare  
14 intervention, that the duty report -- the duty to report  
15 then actually has the perverse effect of putting Indigenous  
16 children in the very danger that it's meant to protect them  
17 from?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely it can, if  
19 she's not -- if she's hesitant to come forward and she  
20 chooses just to remain in that -- in that lifestyle because  
21 she's afraid of her children being apprehended, definitely.

22 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And you also  
23 testified yesterday that you believe the child welfare  
24 system needs a lot of work. I believe those are the words  
25 that you used?

1                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

2                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that  
3 this work should include a review of these kinds of  
4 unintended harmful effects of the duty to report, and  
5 perhaps appropriate reforms to the relevant legislation to  
6 reduce those effects?

7                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

8                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay, thank you. Now,  
9 Ms. Montour, I'd like to ask you about something that was  
10 in the Needs Assessment Report, and I can't recall what  
11 exhibit that was, I'm sorry. It was about language, the  
12 topic of Indigenous languages comes up numerous times in  
13 that report.

14                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

15                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And I'm sure most of us  
16 in this room know that a major impact of colonization has  
17 been that -- particularly from residential schools, that  
18 many Indigenous people do not speak their language and  
19 struggle to learn it. Could you briefly explain why your  
20 report highlights language learning in the context of  
21 healing and violence prevention?

22                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Because most people  
23 that come to shelter or to our services are searching.  
24 They've been hurt, they've been traumatized, and they're  
25 searching for healing. And the language is who we are, so

1 helping people to overcome -- and perhaps that language was  
2 stolen from them and they weren't given the opportunity  
3 because of colonization and oppression, to -- to learn that  
4 language, and so the language becomes a vehicle for them to  
5 accept who they are as (speaking in Native language) people  
6 or the original people, so the language is part of -- the  
7 language is our identity.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And would you say that  
9 language learning is not only a healing tool for individual  
10 women, but also for families, communities and nations?

11 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So with that in  
13 mind, would you recommend that violence related services  
14 and strategies for Indigenous people include consideration  
15 of language learning and funding for it?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Wholeheartedly, yes.

17 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And there was  
18 another thing in the Needs Assessment Report that I also  
19 want to ask you about. At page 29 it discussed some  
20 different elements of cultural practice in shelter  
21 services.

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** One of these elements  
24 that was listed there was connection to the land.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.



1           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And I'd like to explore  
2 a little bit more about why this connection to land is  
3 important when we consider shelter services. So would you  
4 agree that Indigenous peoples, broadly speaking, have  
5 distinctive sacred and reciprocal relationships with their  
6 homelands?

7           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. And I can -- I  
8 come back to teaching as Haudenosaunee women, what we do is  
9 we -- we save the umbilical cord what our babes are born  
10 and we bury that in the land, and we bury that at home, and  
11 what that is so our babies don't go too far from us, they  
12 stay close to the land. But not to mention, our relatives  
13 are in the land, all our -- our -- when people come to us  
14 and they talk about not having any relatives and being  
15 alone in the world, we point to them the land. We point to  
16 them the trees that know them, the medicines that they  
17 have. We -- we point to all the relatives that they have  
18 in the land according to our teachings, and so -- and I  
19 think that's in there also, specifically for the north.

20           The north have this amazing connection to  
21 the land that I absolutely respect from my colleagues that  
22 work in the north, and they -- they teach on the land and  
23 they have that connection to the land. But I think across  
24 the board as the (speaking in Native language) people are  
25 the original people, we have that connection to the land,

1 so it's important.

2 It's important to introduce that to our  
3 shelter folks who are coming from a place of trauma, of  
4 loss, of grief that is overwhelming, that we point them to  
5 where they can become stable.

6 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So knowing that  
7 systemic disregard for, and disruption of the relationship  
8 between Indigenous peoples and their homelands has been a  
9 major part of colonization, would you say that the damage  
10 to this people/land relationship has been a major driver of  
11 violence against Indigenous women and children?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And would you  
14 agree that restoring and strengthening these relationships  
15 between peoples and their homelands is a critical part of  
16 healing Indigenous families, communities and nations?

17 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

18 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, knowing that there  
19 may be good reason that Indigenous women and children leave  
20 their community and seek crisis services elsewhere, would  
21 that -- knowing that sometimes that might be the right  
22 thing to do, would you agree that when Indigenous women and  
23 children are forced to leave their homelands because they  
24 cannot live safely within their own nation's territories  
25 because there's not -- there are not adequate services

1       there, that that displacement itself is an additional form  
2       of violence?

3                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, it is.

4                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Do you recommend that a  
5       core guiding principle of policy decision related to crisis  
6       services for Indigenous people should be respect for their  
7       relationship with their homelands, including through  
8       reducing situations where they would be forced to leave  
9       those homelands to escape violence?

10                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

11                  **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I  
12       have a couple questions for you now about privacy.

13                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14                  **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yesterday, you  
15       had -- you had talked about how sometimes Indigenous women  
16       make the choice to go to mainstream shelters rather than  
17       Indigenous shelters because they're concerned about  
18       confidentiality?

19                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20                  **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree that the  
21       decision to go to a mainstream shelter will often for them  
22       then represent a trade off whereby they're forced to choose  
23       between protecting their privacy and receiving culturally  
24       appropriate services?

25                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

1           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you agree then  
2           that the improvement of shelter services to Indigenous  
3           women should have two approaches: One being increasing the  
4           number of Indigenous shelters; and the other being  
5           improving the cultural appropriateness of the services  
6           they're receiving in mainstream shelters?

7           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

8           **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Nakuset, I have a  
9           couple questions for you now. Yesterday you talked about  
10          some of the issues that -- that homeless Indigenous people  
11          encounter, especially with police and being ticketed for  
12          various things that they're trying to do just to stay safe  
13          and survive, and you talked in particular about their use  
14          of the subway system --

15          **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16          **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** -- to stay at night.  
17          Would you recommend that the municipal laws that are the  
18          basis for all of these tickets around stuff, that these  
19          municipal laws that are essentially penalizing severe  
20          poverty and homelessness be reviewed through that lens?

21          **NAKUSET:** Yes, and not only, you know, make  
22          a recommendation, we actually sent in a letter  
23          to -- there's a minister of homelessness in Montreal, Serge  
24          Lareault, and we wrote how it's discriminatory, the way  
25          that they are ticketing Indigenous people.

1                   Today, on the front cover of the Gazette,  
2                   there's a picture of an Inuk woman that has \$25,000 worth  
3                   of tickets that she will never be able to pay off, and she  
4                   is saying I am basically a slave now. I am work -- trying  
5                   to work this off. It is totally demoralizing. And we keep  
6                   advocating, you know -- I mean, it was Christopher Curtis  
7                   that wrote the article, and this is what I'm talking about,  
8                   good allies, because I'm outraged. Maybe the rest of the  
9                   people who read this article, our allies, will be outraged,  
10                  and then maybe they'll start making changes because,  
11                  honestly, \$25,000? How -- basically, she's got to work the  
12                  rest of her life off.

13                  **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you  
14                  maybe recommend, then, that we don't just look forward at  
15                  preventing this from happening in the future, but we also  
16                  look back at -- at -- at these penalties that might need to  
17                  be forgiven?

18                  **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And that's what we're  
19                  trying to do. You know what they do in Montreal? Like,  
20                  honestly, Cabot Square is an area where Indigenous people  
21                  have always come to because there's really no urban  
22                  reserve. That's the place they go to. And they get these  
23                  tickets that say, "You are not allowed to step into Cabot  
24                  Square." And we had a situation where one of the -- the  
25                  clients of the shelter that I've known since I walked in

1 the door, they -- the community had made a mural of three  
2 Inuit women. She was one of them.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm.

4 **NAKUSET:** She -- she couldn't walk into the  
5 park to see her own mural. She had to go from across the  
6 street and look at it. And that is wrong on so many  
7 levels.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Would you say that this  
9 is another kind of colonial displacement of Indigenous  
10 people?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yes. And -- and punishment. This  
12 is the only place that she feels comfortable, and she's not  
13 allowed to. She has to sit across the street and watch her  
14 friends.

15 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you. So,  
16 Ms. Nepinak, I have a few questions for you now.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay.

18 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** You spoke a few times  
19 yesterday about colonization as the fundamental source of  
20 the violence, the systematic violence, that we see against  
21 Indigenous women and children.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Now, Article 7 of UNDRIP  
24 also draws a similar -- a similar link. And it says  
25 that -- it draws a link between Indigenous peoples' right

1 to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty, and  
2 security of the person, and then Indigenous peoples'  
3 collective right to live in freedom, peace, and security as  
4 distinct peoples. Would you agree that efforts to ending  
5 violence against Indigenous women must be grounded in a  
6 decolonial approach that aims to free Indigenous peoples  
7 from the imposition of foreign cultural, political, legal,  
8 economic, and social systems?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

10 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And Article 23 of  
11 the UNDRIP talks about that Indigenous peoples has -- have  
12 the right to determine and develop priorities and  
13 strategies for exercising their right to development, and  
14 in particular, they have the right to be actively involved  
15 in developing and determining health, housing, and other  
16 economic and social programs affecting them, and as far as  
17 possible, to administer these programs through their own  
18 institutions.

19 So would you agree that -- that the  
20 decolonial approach would include ensuring that Indigenous  
21 people -- and include women -- exercise increasing control  
22 and self-determination with respect to the design, funding,  
23 and delivery of programs for their peoples?

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And Article 4 of UNDRIP

1 states that Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right  
2 to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or  
3 self-government in matters that are related to their  
4 internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for  
5 financing these autonomous functions. Would you agree that  
6 the shift to greater self-determination for Indigenous  
7 peoples must be accompanied by a shift to greater  
8 Indigenous control of the funds and resources necessary to  
9 ensure safety, dignity, justice, and wellness for  
10 Indigenous peoples?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Ms. Montour, I'd  
13 like to ask you about something else that was in the needs  
14 assessment report. There was a reference in that report to  
15 spiritual abuse. Could you briefly explain what that term  
16 means in the context of Indigenous people?

17 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Often what we do at  
18 Ganohkwasra is we -- we ask about spiritual abuse, we  
19 assess that. And we -- and, of course, many people don't  
20 understand what that means. So we talk about any threats  
21 for -- for people to use bad medicine, for example, would  
22 be something that we would consider as spiritual abuse.  
23 Any shaming of any of their belief system, any of their  
24 religious -- so if they go to long house, if they are  
25 supported or if they are shamed, they'll talk about that.



1 Or if they go to church, if they're supported or shamed by  
2 family members or -- so that -- I guess that's what we mean  
3 is any -- any threats or fears of people using bad medicine  
4 or any -- anything like that on them or -- because  
5 sometimes people will actually control people by  
6 threatening to use bad medicine on them or their family or  
7 their children.

8 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So was it  
9 mentioned in the report because this is one reason that  
10 Indigenous people sometimes seek shelter services?

11 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes.

12 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in -- in your  
13 experience in the field, do mainstream shelters adequately  
14 recognize and -- and address this issue of spiritual abuse?

15 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** No, they don't.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you say  
17 that mainstream shelters are -- are a place where spiritual  
18 abuse is ever perpetuated against Indigenous people?

19 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** It's possible that could  
20 happen, just because they don't understand. But with  
21 the -- the shelter standards that we have given -- and many  
22 of the mainstream shelters are trying to incorporate the  
23 shelter -- Indigenous shelter standards. There is a list  
24 there for them to -- even to refer their Indigenous  
25 residents to a traditional knowledge holder or an Elder to

1 help them.

2 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Would you  
3 recommend that more attention, programming, and funding be  
4 directed to this issue of spiritual abuse across the  
5 shelter system?

6 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And I have  
8 another question for you as -- as a woman who belongs to a  
9 matriarchal culture. On -- on page 24 of the needs  
10 assessment report, it states that one characteristic of  
11 Indigenous women who use shelters is patriarchal domination  
12 within their home.

13 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Is it fair to say that  
15 in the context of Indigenous communities across Canada,  
16 patriarchal domination is a widespread impact of  
17 colonization?

18 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely. It's  
19 a -- it's a value that came in that wasn't -- that was the  
20 settler's values. It wasn't our values. And through  
21 colonization, it was -- it was imposed on our people to the  
22 place where four or five generations later, the idea of the  
23 matriarchal society is very foreign to many of our people.  
24 And so -- which was our traditional ways. So I definitely  
25 believe that that has come in as a form of colonization and

1 is -- is present in many families today, and -- and can be  
2 very harmful, in fact.

3 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** M'hm. So would you say  
4 that strategies for reducing violence against Indigenous  
5 women must then address patriarchy as a key driver of that  
6 violence?

7 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes. I would say that,  
8 but also as a Hodinöhsö:ni women -- woman, I would also say  
9 that we -- what we need to do is we all need to look at our  
10 power, our privilege, and to be aware of how that can be  
11 abusive in -- in any way. So I think that whether it's  
12 patriarchal or -- or again, I talked yesterday about our  
13 traditional teachings, about that duality of the good and  
14 the bad twin is in everybody. So I think we all need to  
15 look at that.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

17 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Definitely patriarchal,  
18 yes. If it's -- if it's off balance, it definitely needs  
19 to be looked at.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Nakuset, I have a  
21 question for you. You spoke yesterday about sometimes  
22 being forced to shape your shelter programming in certain  
23 ways in order to access funding for them.

24 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And did I understand you

1 correctly that this sometimes includes compromising with  
2 respect to the cultural integrity of your programming? The  
3 cultural appropriateness of your programming? I'm thinking  
4 of you spoke about -- about Elders not being  
5 properly -- properly approached and -- and recognized.

6 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. It's a loaded question.  
7 I'm just thinking about all the different programs that we  
8 have to sort of tweak in order to fit into the right box.  
9 And that is an ongoing issue.

10 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Okay. Now,  
11 Article 8 of UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples and  
12 individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced  
13 assimilation, and that the state shall provide effective  
14 mechanisms for the prevention and redress for any form of  
15 forced assimilation or integration. Would you say that  
16 the -- these tweaks and sacrifices that you make in your  
17 programming in order to access funding are forms of forced  
18 assimilation or integration?

19 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And would you recommend  
21 that funding models and policies related to services for  
22 Indigenous people be systematically reviewed and reformed  
23 through an antiracist and decolonial lens?

24 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

25 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. So we just have a

1 couple minutes left. I'd like to ask each of you very,  
2 very quickly in a few words if you -- if you have a  
3 response to this question. If you could each get enough  
4 money to improve one thing about Indigenous shelter  
5 services, what might that one thing be?

6 Do you want to go first, Ms. Nepinak?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I would -- oh, it's  
8 hard to prioritize because there's such a high need in --  
9 in -- in every aspect of the issue of violence, but I would  
10 probably have to go with the children and -- and increase  
11 services and supports for the little ones that are coming  
12 into the shelter who are so traumatized and the broken  
13 little spirits that come in, because you can often see this  
14 in their -- in their eyes, and -- so increase supports for  
15 children who are traumatized by violence.

16 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. And in a sentence  
17 or two, Ms. Montour, what might your one thing be?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would ensure that my  
19 shelter is no longer single-staffed. I would hire enough so  
20 that it -- at least double, maybe triple-staffed at --  
21 during high-crisis times.

22 **NAKUSET:** Repeat the question again?

23 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** If you could get enough  
24 funding to fix one problem with -- with your Indigenous  
25 shelter, what might that one thing be?

1                   **NAKUSET:** Funding. Give us unlimited money.

2                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Unlimited money.

3                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

5                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. It's unlimited  
6 money. All right.

7                                   And now I have one minute left and I'm going  
8 to take up the challenge of our MC yesterday to say  
9 something about the growing -- Indigenous people as the  
10 fastest-growing part of the Canadian population. Would you  
11 -- maybe I'll ask you, Ms. Nepinak. Would you agree that  
12 there is a common stereotype among non-Indigenous Canadians  
13 that Indigenous communities are a drain on our system, our  
14 economic system?

15                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, it's racism, is  
16 what it is, and absolutely, there is. I -- I mean, you just  
17 need to look at some of the news headlines across the  
18 country and some of the comments that are made that --

19                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Yeah, we -- yeah.

20                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- you know, that -- that  
21 we -- we don't pay our taxes, that we -- all Indigenous  
22 women are high-risk, et cetera, et cetera.

23                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay.

24                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So there is a common...

25                   **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** And so, sorry, with the

1 last ten seconds, I'm going to ask you, would you say that  
2 because Indigenous people are actually the fastest-growing  
3 part of the Canadian population, that it is an important and  
4 excellent investment to be fixing these problems now?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. It -- we're  
6 -- we're in a crisis. It needs to be fixed now.

7 **MS. SARAH BEAMISH:** Okay. Thank you so much  
8 to all of you for your answers today.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. --  
10 thank you, Ms. Beamish. We -- so that we see the -- the  
11 third party, through Mr. Darrin Blain had given assigned,  
12 we're now moving to the fourth party, which is Ms. Beth  
13 Symes on behalf of Pauktuutit.

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Oh, sorry,  
15 and actually, before we call that, is it possible to have --  
16 we've had a request for a five-minute break, so I'm sorry,  
17 Ms. Symes. If we could just have a five-minute break, that  
18 would -- thank you. Five minutes.

19 --- Upon recessing at 9:31 a.m.

20 --- Upon reconvening at 9:40 a.m.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Please set the time  
22 for Pauktuutit and partner organizations for 37 minutes.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Thank you. My name is Beth  
24 Symes, and I represent Pauktuutit, Labrador Inuit Women's  
25 Association, Saturviit, the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre,

1 and the Manitoba Inuit Association. And my focus today is  
2 on Inuit women and girls.

3 And I -- I want to explain to you that these  
4 questions that I ask, the areas I ask, come out of my  
5 client's workshopping the issues -- issues for Inuit  
6 women -- women and girls. And I have been invaluablely  
7 assisted by the contributions of Charlotte Wolfrey and  
8 Sarah Nowyakallak who sit on the Family Advisory Committee  
9 and are here today and -- and have been helping me, and I  
10 share their wisdoms.

11 I do want to acknowledge and thank you for  
12 actually living out your care, your concern, for Indigenous  
13 women. You do it every day, and my clients acknowledge  
14 that and thank you.

15 **JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:**

17 So I'm going to begin with you, Josie, and  
18 ask: Has Awo Taan ever had Inuit in your shelter, in your  
19 services?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, we have.

21 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, Sandra, has your  
22 shelter -- you're on Six Nations land in Ontario, but also  
23 speaking from the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, do you  
24 have Inuit women in your shelters?

25 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Yes, we have.



1 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. SYMES:**

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, of course, Nakuset, I  
4 know that you have Inuit women. In fact, there is no Inuit  
5 women's shelter in Montreal, is there?

6 **NAKUSET:** No. 50 percent of our clientele  
7 is Inuit. I know that there are other services like Chez  
8 Doris that also partners with Makivik, and they have  
9 special funding -- I think PAQ does -- *Projets Autochtones*  
10 *du Québec* also gets money from them. So I think what  
11 happens is other organizations get small bits of money to  
12 address or service Inuit people. I believe the Open Door  
13 also receives money, and the Native Friendship Centre.

14 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So in your service of both  
15 Inuit and First Nations women, you'd agree with me that the  
16 needs of Inuit women can be different than the needs of  
17 First Nations women who come to your shelter?

18 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And that the way that  
20 they -- the ideal way to receive the services that they  
21 need can also be different?

22 **NAKUSET:** Say that again? The ideal way?

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** That the services are  
24 delivered to Inuit women can be different than the way  
25 services are delivered to First Nations women.

1                   **NAKUSET:** Yes. I have Irene Qavavauq, who  
2 works for me. She is Inuk, and she speaks the language, so  
3 we make sure that we have the staff that can speak. I  
4 mean, she doesn't have both dialects so sometimes it's  
5 limited, but, I mean, it's better than my Inuktitut.

6                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** And way better than mine.  
7 Now, I just want to reference some data from the 2016  
8 census that was, for the record, marked as Exhibit 21 in  
9 the first panel in Quebec City. So it's in on the record,  
10 and I'm just going to go to it. That census says that in  
11 2016, there were 975 Inuit in Montreal, and that 63 percent  
12 of them were women. Does that number seem a little bit low  
13 to you?

14                   **NAKUSET:** Totally low.

15                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you join with the  
16 Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre in taking issue with those  
17 numbers and concerned that the Inuit in urban centres have  
18 been really undercounted, substantially undercounted?

19                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, you've been collecting  
21 data -- I'm now going to focus the questions on Montreal  
22 because I've got more information about that to ask you.  
23 You've been collecting data electronically from five to  
24 seven years. Can you tell us, Nakuset, where do the Inuit  
25 women come from who come to your shelter? And by that, I

1 mean, where in Inuit Nunangat do they come from?

2 **NAKUSET:** I don't know exactly because, as  
3 the executive director, I don't do the intakes. Nunavut  
4 and Nunavik is where they come from. And like I said,  
5 there is a -- a huge amount of Inuit population in -- in  
6 Montreal.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. And second question,  
8 then. For the women, the Inuit women who come to your  
9 shelter, do you track why they come? Just the presenting  
10 reasons, and can you tell us about that?

11 **NAKUSET:** Well, we always do full intake, so  
12 we find out why. But what I have come to see in the last,  
13 you know, couple of years that I've been working is that  
14 through the northern module, there's not enough health  
15 services in -- in the community, so they come to Montreal.  
16 And when they come to Montreal, they are just astounded  
17 with, you know, the lower prices of everything, the amount  
18 of housing, and they choose to stay in the city. But  
19 because they don't speak French, because they don't have  
20 the education in order to get a job, they fall through the  
21 cracks, and they end up at the shelters.

22 So -- and we're lucky to have, you know, an  
23 outreach worker at Cabot Square because he also sees a  
24 large population of Inuit there, too. They used to have  
25 Nunavik House right on Tupper Street, which is right by

1 Cabot Square, so that's why there's a -- a large population  
2 around that area. Now, it's moved to Dorval. So -- but we  
3 still see a large population, so we try to create a lot of  
4 services for them. I'm not sure if I answered your  
5 question.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You did.

7 **NAKUSET:** Okay.

8 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Absolutely. So,  
9 Commissioners, you'll remember that in the Montreal  
10 hearing, Sarah Nowyakallak and her family told the story  
11 about when their -- Sarah's older sister went missing in  
12 Montreal, and the family came from -- from Nunavik. And  
13 they were -- they were just lost as to how to link into the  
14 services that -- that exist, right? Just -- just  
15 completely lost how to -- part of it was language.

16 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

17 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Part of it was Montreal is,  
18 like, many, many times bigger.

19 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And most importantly, the  
21 different way of doing things.

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Right? And is that -- was  
24 Sarah's description of -- of that, just being lost as to  
25 how the system works, pretty common amongst Inuit women

1           that you serve?

2                       **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And, unfortunately,  
3           working at the Native Women's Shelter I've seen a lot of  
4           our Inuit women pass away. The streets, living on them, it  
5           just -- it kills them. And we're always hoping that they  
6           will come back to the shelter to sort of strengthen them so  
7           they can decide where they want to go, if they want to  
8           return to the community, if they want to stay here, if we  
9           can give them the services, but that's also why we have the  
10          Iskweu Project. So, I mean, if you ever see our logo, we  
11          have an ulu on it. We want the women to see our poster and  
12          to let them know that this is a way to navigate the city,  
13          the city will eat you up, so these are the ways and these  
14          are the organizations and these are the people that you can  
15          call that are Indigenous that will help you.

16                      **MS. BETH SYMES:** So, Commissioners, this is  
17          my first chance to ask questions about urban Inuit women,  
18          so that's why I'm focussing on this. Maybe we should all  
19          turn to Exhibit 38, that wonderful Housing Needs and  
20          Preferences of Indigenous People Using Community Resources  
21          in Montreal. If you've got it, maybe we could go through  
22          it.

23                      Nakuset, you helped develop the questions  
24          for the survey?

25                      **NAKUSET:** No.

1                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Your staff did?

2                   **NAKUSET:** My -- yes, yes, my --

3                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay.

4                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah, my -- I run the committee,  
5 but, yes, Tilly, who works through the Native Women's  
6 Shelter, was an integral part of this.

7                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** When I say "you," perhaps I  
8 mean sort of like the collective you, all right?

9                   **NAKUSET:** Okay.

10                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** I'll give you credit for  
11 everything, but you're very honest and generous with your  
12 staff. All right. And obviously you've read this report;  
13 do you agree with its findings?

14                  **NAKUSET:** Yes.

15                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** It's your lived reality as  
16 well, is it?

17                  **NAKUSET:** Yes.

18                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** And so the study shows  
19 that -- it's about homelessness in Montreal amongst  
20 Indigenous people?

21                  **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

22                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** And it shows, then, that of  
23 the people surveyed, the Inuit women were considerably  
24 younger than the Inuit men that were -- that were surveyed?

25                  **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

1           **MS. BETH SYMES:** Inuit -- for women it was,  
2 I think, around a median age of 38, whereas for men it was  
3 around 45. And I'm just reading off those graphs.

4           **NAKUSET:** Okay.

5           **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. And 11 percent of  
6 the Inuit women had been in Montreal for less than two  
7 years?

8           **NAKUSET:** Okay.

9           **MS. BETH SYMES:** But an interesting  
10 statistic is that 70 percent of the Inuit women had been in  
11 Montreal for five years or more.

12          **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

13          **MS. BETH SYMES:** As you said, they come  
14 south maybe for a reason, but they stay --

15          **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16          **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- the Inuit women stay.  
17 And let's talk next about language. Sandra, you said  
18 language is identity, it's who we are?

19          **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20          **MS. BETH SYMES:** And, Nakuset, would you  
21 agree with me, again from the Inuit perspective, it's  
22 really important, language is really important to be able  
23 to communicate?

24          **NAKUSET:** Absolutely, that's why I have  
25 staff that speak the language.

1                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** But I'm thinking about the  
2 Inuk woman, right?

3                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** So if she's trying to tell  
5 her story --

6                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

7                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- to the Montreal  
8 police --

9                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

10                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- right?

11                  **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

12                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** It's incredibly important  
13 that she's able to communicate what happened, its impact on  
14 her, et cetera?

15                  **NAKUSET:** Yeah. And I would go across the  
16 board. Also at youth protection, at hospitals, everywhere.  
17 They need to be able to speak their language and they get  
18 lost in the communication.

19                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** And Montreal is a French  
20 speaking city predominantly.

21                  **NAKUSET:** M'hm, yeah.

22                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** Yet I look at this study,  
23 Exhibit 38, and I see that 13 percent of the women -- of  
24 the Inuit women who were surveyed speak only Inuktitut?

25                  **NAKUSET:** M'hm.



1                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Could you answer yes or no,  
2                   sorry, it's just --

3                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

4                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- we're trying to create a  
5                   record.

6                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Thank you. And that 66  
8                   percent of the Inuit women surveyed speak no French  
9                   whatsoever?

10                  **NAKUSET:** Yes.

11                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** And it's pretty hard, would  
12                  you agree with me, it's very hard to communicate your  
13                  needs, your needs for services, if you speak no French?

14                  **NAKUSET:** That's right.

15                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you agree with me  
16                  that it's really impossible to communicate your needs to  
17                  the service providers if you speak only Inuktitut?

18                  **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, in Happy Valley-Goose  
20                  Bay the Inquiry learned that although an Inuk family might  
21                  have spoken English, when it came to telling their story  
22                  about something that was deeply intimate, like sexual  
23                  violence --

24                  **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

25                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- or horrendous deaths,

1 et cetera, when they came to that part of the story they  
2 switched to their language?

3 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you agree with me  
5 that service providers, whether they are police or health  
6 care or addictions services or child welfare services, have  
7 to understand?

8 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Being able to speak in your  
10 own language is essential to being able to communicate?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, they should all have  
12 translators.

13 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Because I assume that in  
14 Montreal there are few, if any, police speaking Inuktitut?

15 **NAKUSET:** There's none.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** In terms of emergency room  
17 services, in hospitals, any Inuktitut nurses, doctors?

18 **NAKUSET:** I'm not sure. I know that the  
19 Crees have Wasaya House, but -- I think that's what it's  
20 called, or Wichia, (ph) I forget the name of it, but it's  
21 at one of the children's hospital, like a special cultural  
22 room, but there's nothing for -- for the Inuit population.

23 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when we go into mental  
24 health services, whether it's for addiction or it's for  
25 seeing a psychiatrist or a psychologist or even a

1 counsellor --

2 **NAKUSET:** Until.

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- that there are virtually  
4 no services in Montreal for Inuktitut?

5 **NAKUSET:** No. No, I mean we have  
6 psychologists that are Mohawk, like Suzy Goodleaf. You  
7 know, we have Anike Seewee (ph). We have a couple of First  
8 Nations, but none yet that are Inuit. But I believe  
9 they're coming.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** That would be wonderful.

11 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when we look at the  
13 statistics from Census Canada, Exhibit 21, Panel 1, Quebec  
14 City, in the 2016, 99 percent of people -- of Inuit living  
15 in Nunavik speak Inuktitut?

16 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

17 **MS. BETH SYMES:** 99 percent. And that 89  
18 percent in Nunavut speak Inuktitut? This is -- this is  
19 virtually everyone?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, it's beautiful.

21 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And so when they come  
22 south, that's still their language?

23 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And would you -- you told  
25 this wonderful story yesterday too, where you add on

1 culture to language, the story about the woman who was  
2 identified as Cree, and when the -- when the intake person  
3 says, but why didn't she tell me --

4 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- that she was Inuk --

6 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

7 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- your staff said because  
8 you've got her child?

9 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And so the cultural and the  
11 language intersect in a way such that nuances are lost in  
12 the telling of the stories?

13 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. And we also find that  
14 with the Inuit men, that when they go to court and they  
15 don't look at the judge because it's seen as disrespectful,  
16 but then, you know, we are judged as, oh, you must be  
17 guilty because you can't even look at us in the eye. So I  
18 think that there needs to be training on all levels.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And let's go to Exhibit 38  
20 and its findings. On page 1 the researchers say very  
21 bluntly that Inuit are overrepresented amongst the homeless  
22 in Montreal?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry, Ms. Symes,  
25 can you -- you said the exhibit name, can you just confirm

1 the title of that?

2 MS. BETH SYMES: Housing Needs and  
3 Preferences of Indigenous People.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.

5 MS. BETH SYMES: That's the one I ask  
6 everyone to turn up.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

8 MS. BETH SYMES: I'm going to be using that  
9 one. Now, if we go to page 11 of that report.

10 NAKUSET: Yeah.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: The researchers find the  
12 following, and I just want to go through with -- them  
13 because I think they're so important. That in Montreal the  
14 Inuit are isolated by language --

15 NAKUSET: M'hm.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: -- do you agree?

17 NAKUSET: Yeah.

18 MS. BETH SYMES: They are less connected to  
19 public services.

20 NAKUSET: Yeah.

21 MS. BETH SYMES: They are more vulnerable?

22 NAKUSET: Yeah.

23 MS. BETH SYMES: The Inuit are poor?

24 NAKUSET: Yes.

25 MS. BETH SYMES: They're less likely to live

1 in their own home?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

3 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And this is true of  
4 comparing them to other Indigenous people?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

6 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So in Montreal, would you  
7 agree with me that it -- Inuit, and in particular Inuit  
8 women and girls, are at -- most at risk?

9 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. They are very, very high at  
10 risk, and that's why we have, you know, such a large  
11 population at the shelter.

12 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You've worked tirelessly  
13 with your message about cultural -- cultural competence to  
14 service providers.

15 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You've -- you've been, you  
17 know, given the back of people's hand, and you've come back  
18 for more. I sure want you on my side when I get into  
19 trouble, I tell you. You're a fierce advocate, madam. You  
20 -- you have tried this over and over again to try and sell  
21 that you must -- that service providers must be culturally  
22 competent, really, in order to do their job.

23 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Okay. This isn't a, it  
25 would be nice if it is -- you actually can't provide

1 services of health, child welfare, et cetera, unless you are  
2 culturally competent.

3 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And you spoke yesterday  
5 about your frustration in -- in trying to educate the  
6 police.

7 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

8 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And you're Pollyannaish that  
9 this new major is going to make a difference. But there is  
10 a huge gap, isn't there? A huge gap between provision of  
11 police services and cultural competency?

12 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

13 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when you're doing the  
14 cultural competency, I -- I understood, and please correct  
15 me, that it was on behalf of Indigenous people. It was  
16 cultural competency for all -- for all Indigenous people,  
17 not just for First Nations, not just for Inuit; is that  
18 correct?

19 **NAKUSET:** I'm sorry, what do you mean? I was  
20 giving the training to non-Indigenous people on Indigenous  
21 people, so First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

22 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So -- so my question is, the  
23 course that you gave to non-Indigenous --

24 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

25 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- people --

1                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

2                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- was cultural competency  
3 with respect to First Nations, yes?

4                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

5                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Métis?

6                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** And Inuit?

8                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

9                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** And how long was the  
10 training? How many hours?

11                   **NAKUSET:** Well, you know, we developed a  
12 whole bunch of different things. I mean, we had the -- the  
13 manual that was put into evidence there. And that -- had  
14 they utilized it, it could be as long as they wanted it to  
15 be. The training that we actually did was, I think they  
16 gave us 2.5 hours. I think we negotiated 4.5 hours. Yeah,  
17 they wouldn't even give us a whole day.

18                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** I was really taken aback  
19 when you said that the police officers laughed during the  
20 presentation.

21                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah. They were very, very  
22 disrespectful. I mean, I was there as a helper, and I  
23 actually had to walk around the blanket and tell people to  
24 stop it. I was policing the police. I'm not very popular  
25 with them by the way.



1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. BETH SYMES: That's not your role in  
3 life, to be popular. And when an Inuit -- an Inuk woman  
4 goes to the police, right --

5 NAKUSET: M'hm.

6 MS. BETH SYMES: -- you send a staff with  
7 her, right?

8 NAKUSET: Always. They won't go.

9 MS. BETH SYMES: And if they went alone, they  
10 wouldn't get the services that they deserve?

11 NAKUSET: They don't -- they won't go alone.  
12 They won't. We have to have long conversations with them,  
13 and -- and be by their side. And I remember even Jessica,  
14 the Iskweu worker, she had to -- an Inuk woman had to give  
15 testimony, and halfway through, she was just so overcome.  
16 And Jessica said to the police officer, "Can -- can I just  
17 take her outside for a cigarette?" And the police officer  
18 was, like, "No, you can't." And Jessica really convinced  
19 him. So just that break for her to  
20 breathe --

21 MS. BETH SYMES: M'hm.

22 NAKUSET: -- to debrief a little bit, and  
23 then to go back and finish. Like, because she wouldn't have  
24 done it otherwise. So if we don't have, you know, these  
25 specialized workers to -- to be by their side and to help

1       them just be treated like human beings, right, it's not  
2       going to work.

3                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Now, we've talked -- you've  
4       talked, actually, about police, you've talked about physical  
5       healthcare --

6                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

7                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- you've talked about  
8       mental healthcare and addiction. So I'm going to skip right  
9       to child protection. In Batshaw, is that how you pronounce  
10      it?

11                  **NAKUSET:** Batshaw.

12                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** In Batshaw then, for  
13      Inuit --

14                  **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

15                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- Inuit women and their  
16      children, have they received, to your knowledge, any  
17      cultural training for Inuit?

18                  **NAKUSET:** Well, I did training. So we did  
19      training on, sort of, like Native 101. And then last year,  
20      the network team, so Vicki Balldo and Elizabeth Fast,  
21      Catherine Richardson, one of my staff, went in and did  
22      another training. So we try and we put a lot of Inuit  
23      content in it. So we have to advocate, and we have to be,  
24      like, "Here's the training. You want the training? I bet  
25      you'll like the training. You should really take the

1 training. You going to take the training yet?" So it's  
2 almost like stalkers, right, friendly stalkers, but that's  
3 what you have to do. You have to be relentless.

4 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And has anyone told you that  
5 you and the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre have the same  
6 mission and the same drive to try and increase the cultural  
7 competence of child protection workers?

8 **NAKUSET:** No. But it's the best compliment I  
9 ever got.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You deserve it. When --  
11 when an Inuk child is apprehended, taken away in Montreal,  
12 is she placed in a on -- a non-Inuit setting?

13 **NAKUSET:** She is placed in a non-Inuit  
14 setting. Yeah. It's -- it's pretty much the norm, which is  
15 why we try to actively recruit Aboriginal families, Inuit  
16 families. We've being doing it for years. I have people  
17 who tell me, "Why are you working with the enemy?" I'm like  
18 -- because I'll go to these places with Batshaw, and I'm,  
19 like, "If I don't, we're not going to change." But most of  
20 the children are placed with non -- and they separate the  
21 children. If they have siblings, it is -- we just have  
22 horror story after horror story about what happens.

23 And I just have to say, I've seen women,  
24 Inuit women, that have let's say seven children, they take  
25 the first child, and then when she's pregnant with the next

1 one, Youth Protection is at the hospital ready to take that  
2 child. And then the third child, and then -- so they don't  
3 even give her a chance to redeem herself. They just assume  
4 that she's going to be a bad mother, which is why I started  
5 the collaboration with Batshaw. You know, trying to get  
6 them to follow it, it is -- is not as easy. But, you know,  
7 at least you -- you got to, kind of, put a step forward. So  
8 it's -- it -- and, you know, one particular mother, you  
9 know, she's -- she's not with us anymore. It kills them.

10 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And when a child, an -- an  
11 Inuk child is taken -- taken away, she's also taken away  
12 from her extended family?

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Her aunties, her uncles --

15 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- or -- because they could  
17 well be in Nunavik, right?

18 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

19 **MS. BETH SYMES:** Or Nunavut, or anywhere  
20 else?

21 **NAKUSET:** Can I just say that there was a  
22 particular case where this Inuit boy wanted to see his  
23 cousin, and they didn't allow it. They -- he was, I think,  
24 like, six or something, and he was already losing the  
25 language. And our case workers were trying to say, "Can we

1 -- we'd like to put him in Inuit Inuktitut classes." And  
2 they wouldn't permit it in -- in the -- in the -- in, like,  
3 the care or the safety plan for him. They -- they wouldn't  
4 do that. Like, when he returns, he's not going to be able  
5 to speak anymore. You don't think that's a priority? "Oh,  
6 no. It's not a priority." But we have to advocate on every  
7 single level. And it's -- it's not easy. I mean, my staff  
8 is amazing.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And -- and so when the  
10 children are placed in -- in a non -- a non-Inuit foster  
11 family, they, you've said, lost their language, but they  
12 also lose their culture, right? There's no obligation on a  
13 foster parent to continue the Inuit cultures and traditions  
14 for them?

15 **NAKUSET:** And not only that, there are  
16 biases. I can -- oh, my God. I have heard from colleagues,  
17 because there's the Rising Sun Childcare Centre, sometimes  
18 -- there was a mother that came in, so a white foster  
19 mother, and she was discussing her child, and they're, like,  
20 "Yeah, well, you know, he's kind of dirty, but, you know,  
21 he's Inuk, so that makes sense, right?" What? So now, I'm  
22 like, all right, so now, anyone who takes an Indigenous  
23 child, we got to teach those parents. Like, I said, it's an  
24 honour to have our children. If you're going to take our  
25 children, you need to be fully trained. You need to earn

1 the right to have our children. They won't let me do those  
2 interviews yet, but I would love to. I would love to be,  
3 you know, have a team of us, to be, "You want to take one of  
4 our children? Let's see if you're qualified."

5 **MS. BETH SYMES:** And then you said the  
6 obvious thing, aging out of care. In -- in Quebec, when  
7 does a -- a child age out of care?

8 **NAKUSET:** At 18.

9 **MS. BETH SYMES:** So when a child -- when an  
10 Inuk child ages out of care, she's on her own?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah, unless she comes to the  
12 shelter. Sometimes they come back. You know, sometimes  
13 they're at the shelter as children and then they remember it  
14 as a good place, and we're seeing a lot more of those girls  
15 come back.

16 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But if she was taken into  
17 care as a young child, she would have lost her language,  
18 right?

19 **NAKUSET:** Sometimes.

20 **MS. BETH SYMES:** But it -- do you agree with  
21 me it might be very difficult to go back to, let's say,  
22 Nunavut?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes. Yes, for sure.

24 **MS. BETH SYMES:** You agree.

25 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

1                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** Any other part of Inuit  
2 community?

3                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

4                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** And are there any special  
5 programs that Montreal offers for Inuit children who are  
6 aging out of care?

7                   **NAKUSET:** No.

8                   **MS. BETH SYMES:** You were sort of laughing  
9 earlier, but --

10                  **NAKUSET:** No. No.

11                  **MS. BETH SYMES:** -- in amazement.

12                  **NAKUSET:** You know, I have way too many  
13 ideas. I would love to have the transitional, supportive  
14 housing for those that are aging out of this system so they  
15 can just be in something that's culturally appropriate.  
16 They can have maybe up to two to three years there. I'm not  
17 talking about the transitional house that I'm having for the  
18 shelter, that something completely different. This is for,  
19 hey, I've survived Youth Protection, I want to learn who I  
20 am, I want to get the tools that I need so..

21                  Because what happens is, they get out of the  
22 system and they go right to the streets. They have the --  
23 you know, there's a lot of predators, pimps that pick up the  
24 girls at a young age and put them into, you know, the sex  
25 trade. It's, you know, we have to protect them, and I've





1           **MS. BETH SYMES:** And I notice in sharp  
2 contrast that, on the same page of Exhibit 38, that 45  
3 percent of the Inuit men who were surveyed would like to or  
4 plan to or dream of returning home. It's a sharp contrast,  
5 do you agree?

6           **NAKUSET:** Yeah. Yeah.

7           **MS. BETH SYMES:** And might that be related to  
8 why they came to Montreal in the first place?

9           **NAKUSET:** I'm not exactly sure if I know the  
10 answer to that.

11          **MS. BETH SYMES:** And that hasn't been -- that  
12 would be an interesting thing to survey, wouldn't it?

13          **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14          **MS. BETH SYMES:** The 2016 Census, again, for  
15 the record, Exhibit 21, in Quebec City, panel number 1.  
16 Census Canada, for -- said in 2016, if you look at the  
17 period, the -- the last ten years, 2006 to 2016, the number  
18 of Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat grew by 61.9 percent.  
19 Does that surprise you?

20          **NAKUSET:** Sorry, I can't wrap my head around  
21 that one. Say that again? The number of --

22          **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** If we  
23 could just stop the time for a minute? Ms. Symes, I -- I  
24 just want to acknowledge that that document hasn't been put  
25 before her, so maybe if you could rephrase the question a

1 little, like --

2 MS. BETH SYMES: Get me to -- let -- let me  
3 do it in a shorthand way then. Statistics Canada 2016,  
4 records for everyone to see that in the ten-year period,  
5 from 2006 to 2016, the number of Inuit living outside Inuit  
6 Nunangat rose by 61.9 percent.

7 NAKUSET: So you saying when they're outside  
8 of the community?

9 MS. BETH SYMES: Yes.

10 NAKUSET: Okay.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: And that they're coming to  
12 major urban centres. Ottawa --

13 NAKUSET: Yeah.

14 MS. BETH SYMES: -- Montreal, Winnipeg --

15 NAKUSET: Yeah.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: -- Edmonton, et cetera.

17 NAKUSET: Yeah.

18 MS. BETH SYMES: Given that statistic, won't  
19 the number of Inuit women seeking your services increase?

20 NAKUSET: Yeah.

21 MS. BETH SYMES: Increase dramatically?

22 NAKUSET: Sure.

23 MS. BETH SYMES: And are you equipped in  
24 terms of resources?

25 NAKUSET: I'm trying.

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. BETH SYMES: No, but if the number is  
3 going up by 61.9, almost 62 percent --

4 NAKUSET: Yeah.

5 MS. BETH SYMES: -- if your caseload is  
6 rising --

7 NAKUSET: Yeah.

8 MS. BETH SYMES: -- let's -- let's project  
9 forward.

10 NAKUSET: Yeah.

11 MS. BETH SYMES: Sixty-two percent increase  
12 in Inuit women. Are you equipped --

13 NAKUSET: No.

14 MS. BETH SYMES: -- resourced to do this?

15 NAKUSET: No. We're coming to you.

16 MS. BETH SYMES: And are the service  
17 providers in Montreal equipped to competently serve, provide  
18 services, to these Inuit women and children?

19 NAKUSET: No.

20 MS. BETH SYMES: Thank you.

21 NAKUSET: Thank you.

22 MS. BETH SYMES: Excuse me. I was taught how  
23 to do this and I'd better not blow it. *Nukoomeek*. It means  
24 thank you.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Thank

1 you. Just with an awareness of the time, I'm asking the  
2 Commissioners if I might call one more of the parties that  
3 have 19 minutes before we ask for a break. On that basis, I  
4 would like to invite the Regina Treaty Status Indian  
5 Services up, Ms. Erica Beaudin. Ms. Beaudin will have 19  
6 minutes on the clock. Nineteen minutes on the clock.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Good morning. Oh. Am I  
8 good? Hello. Can you hear? Good morning. A final thank  
9 you to the Elders, drummers, and singers for their prayers  
10 and songs we've heard this week. As well, once again, as a  
11 citizen of Treaty 4, I acknowledge the continued welcome to  
12 Treaty 7 and bring well wishes from our treaty area. My  
13 name is Erica Beaudin and I'm the Executive Director of the  
14 Regina Treaty Status Indian Services.

15 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

17 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Nakuset, *kinanâskomitin*,  
18 and I apologize, I'm a horrible Cree speaker, for your  
19 presentation yesterday morning. Your First Nation, the Lac  
20 La Ronge Indian Band, sits on some of the most beautiful  
21 land in all of this country. Your Chief, Tammy Cook-  
22 Searson, is pretty fierce and definitely a role model for  
23 all of us. I can see that you fit in well with your home  
24 community.

25 This week, we have heard from victim services

1 on Monday. Many of our provinces have their victim services  
2 within the police services. If we think of victim services  
3 to include domestic violence or interpersonal violence or  
4 any missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls'  
5 positions, that's basically what I'm talking about. Now,  
6 yesterday, you talked about having or needing a liaison  
7 between the woman and police. In your experience, do you  
8 believe that when governments decide to have police-based  
9 victim services positions, that these positions aren't as  
10 effective as the victim services or advocacy positions that  
11 are community-based?

12 **NAKUSET:** Sorry, you want to ask that again?

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. Do you believe  
14 that, when governments decide to have police-based victim  
15 services, so the victim services are, like right in the  
16 police services --

17 **NAKUSET:** Like in each station?

18 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Most of the time, in the  
19 municipal police forces. That these positions aren't as  
20 effective as victim services if they are in the community-  
21 based organizations?

22 **NAKUSET:** They should be in the community  
23 organizations. They shouldn't be at the police. I'm not  
24 sure if I'm answering your question properly, but I know  
25 that we -- if they were to give an office at the shelter

1 where we can process and get the expertise to do the  
2 processing, that would actually work. It doesn't work when  
3 they go to the police stations. I don't know if I'm  
4 answering --

5 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. Do you believe  
6 that police and governments continue to keep the power  
7 balance when they have their victim services positions  
8 report to them and their systems as opposed to first and  
9 foremost accountable to the people that they are stating  
10 that they're serving?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yes. And you ask really long  
12 questions.

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** I apologize. Imagine  
14 being one of my kids. They --

15 **(LAUGHTER)**

16 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** -- gloss over  
17 immediately.

18 **(LAUGHTER)**

19 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** So my next question is  
20 -- this week I posed a very similar question to the panel  
21 on health services. It's often difficult to create  
22 long-term programming for the women when as CBOs we are  
23 juggling several grants and contribution agreements, and  
24 many of those are only for months -- month-long initiatives  
25 and definitely not past a year. You spoke of some of this

1 yesterday. Do you stand by that statement?

2 **NAKUSET:** The statement that we don't -- our  
3 funding is too short?

4 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Yes, and just constant  
5 juggling of several?

6 **NAKUSET:** Yes, absolutely.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** As well, have you  
8 noticed the amount allowed for administration and staffing,  
9 so the eligible expenditures that we get -- I'm also an  
10 executive director of a service delivery agency -- the  
11 amount that we're allowed every year seems to be decreasing  
12 for administration and staffing, and then we're expected to  
13 do more programming. So the money is going directly to  
14 programming, however they don't acknowledge that you need  
15 staff in order to do that, and then you have more  
16 reporting.

17 The only -- and I had stated this, the only  
18 more we're expected to do is reporting and more  
19 programming. Would you say this has been your experience?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I would also like to say  
21 that they have a tendency to cut down -- let's say I have  
22 an outreach worker, back in the day it was her salary and  
23 it was emergency funds and it was bus tickets, well, they  
24 cut all that stuff out, so now I have to get additional  
25 monies because when a woman is in crisis and she's outside

1 and she can't eat and she can't feed her children, the  
2 shelter will pay for it because the government no longer  
3 thinks that is important, but we know it is.

4 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Absolutely. For the  
5 record, could you state what would be your best-case  
6 scenario funding and reporting-wise for providing services  
7 and programming for women?

8 **NAKUSET:** Oh, boy. I think funding needs to  
9 be on par with other organizations. I think that we need  
10 to be -- in order to retain the proper staff, we need to  
11 have the right salaries.

12 I think in terms of reporting, it should be  
13 based on their -- their healing plan as opposed to, you  
14 know, out of the 50 clients how many are going to be drug  
15 and alcohol free by the end of the year? We can't promise  
16 that with one-year funding that anyone is going to be  
17 alcohol and drug free. They have years of trauma to go  
18 through, and that is setting us up to fail. So I think  
19 that it needs to be what we think is -- you know, we need  
20 to evaluate it and they need to trust us to know that we  
21 know what we're doing.

22 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Ms. Nakuset,  
23 you spoke of reconciliation yesterday, there is a definite  
24 push for us as Indigenous people to embrace the  
25 government's initiatives of reconciliation. We know that



1 the truth part of truth and reconciliation is a very  
2 difficult discussion to have. Do you believe that Canada  
3 is ready for the truth of Indigenous peoples?

4 **NAKUSET:** I don't know if they're ready for  
5 it, but they're going to get it.

6 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Both the positive and  
7 the negative?

8 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

9 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** For those of us who live  
10 in the city, other than having arts and cultural activities  
11 to celebrate who we are, how do we participate in the truth  
12 process for non-Indigenous people so that we may get to  
13 reconciliation?

14 **NAKUSET:** The truth part, it needs to be in  
15 all education levels. It needs to be -- okay, so  
16 obviously -- oh, my goodness.

17 Not too long ago I was asked if I could do  
18 something on reconciliation for a -- primary schools, so,  
19 you know, kindergarten to grade 6. And they wanted to know  
20 about the truth, and the truth is not so easy for this age  
21 group to digest. So what I suggested was look at the 11  
22 Nations, look at the beauty of each culture and have the  
23 children do paintings and learn their stories and learn  
24 their culture and the differences, and they did it.

25 That's -- you know, it has to be targeted to

1 each level, and, you know, that -- those 94  
2 recommendations, they should be able to recite them at,  
3 like, all the institutional levels. I'll go in and ask  
4 them. Well, in a perfect world.

5 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** If we envision true  
6 reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people  
7 in what is now Canada, what do you believe this will look  
8 like in the funding of services for Indigenous women and  
9 children?

10 **NAKUSET:** We would get more.

11 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you.

12 **NAKUSET:** Thank you.

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of  
14 addictions treatment facilities for Indigenous women. You  
15 stated that six weeks is not long enough. Do you believe  
16 that an integrated women's treatment facility that  
17 prioritizes trauma, PTSD, addictions, life skills that is  
18 grounded in Indigenous culture, perhaps being as long of a  
19 stay as six months, would you agree this would be more of a  
20 long-term solution towards a healthy life than a six-week  
21 addictions treatment facility?

22 **NAKUSET:** Yes, and on top of that they  
23 should be able to keep their children with them. Because a  
24 lot of the times if they know their kids are going to go  
25 into care, well, they don't want to lose that connection.

1 So allowing them to have a child program in the same  
2 facility is -- would be key.

3 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you once again,  
4 Ms. Nakuset.

5 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

6 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:**

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Ms. Nepinak.

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** (Speaking in Native  
10 language) for your presentation yesterday. I have not  
11 visited the Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, however I'd  
12 love to visit one day.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

14 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** In regards to the  
15 continuum of services in a women's, children's, family's  
16 case plan, how important is it to -- in providing  
17 uninterrupted services to overall wellbeing?

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, the focus should  
19 be on keeping family together and keeping mom and child  
20 together, and so our service plan is really about doing  
21 just that, and ensuring that the basic needs, for one, are  
22 met, including food, clothing and shelter. But also a safe  
23 and affordable home to go to with transitional supports and  
24 longer term supports from -- from our outreach workers, as  
25 well as our cultural connections in the community.

1           **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. Yesterday  
2 you spoke at length about the challenges with funding.  
3 There are many ineligible expenditures that are in our  
4 contribution agreements, however we know they are integral  
5 to the wellbeing of our families. A quick example would be  
6 nutrition, many of our contribution agreements don't  
7 believe that eating is a good -- is part of the wellbeing  
8 of serving Indigenous people, or they may give you 50 cents  
9 for a meal.

10                   In your discussions -- in your discussion  
11 you commented the very practical issue such as  
12 transportation and the example I gave, but I'm going to ask  
13 you about knowledge keepers or Elder services. These are  
14 integral to the wellbeing of our participants, correct?

15           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

16           **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Would it be your  
17 recommendation that all contribution agreements allow for  
18 increased eligibility to our knowledge keepers and Elders?

19           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Actually, I believe that  
20 our contribution agreements or any contracts or grants that  
21 we receive with government or municipal agencies should  
22 include Elders as an essential service, not as a side if we  
23 have additional money, but it should be part of the funding  
24 structure.

25           **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** In many of our

1 contribution agreements, of course for the safety and  
2 wellbeing of our participants, it includes criminal records  
3 checks, vulnerable sector checks, those types of things,  
4 and our knowledge keepers have no issue with this. That's  
5 on the safety part, but how do we get around sometimes our  
6 funding agencies requiring us to validate or legitimize our  
7 knowledge keepers or Elders as service providers?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I think that's -- that's  
9 a role of the community, and I think that that also depends  
10 on where the community is in terms of how that validation  
11 happens to Elders. And I think it needs to be left to the  
12 community to -- to monitor that, as well as to place the  
13 values that are -- that are integral to who the Elders are,  
14 but also a monitoring system to ensure that these are all  
15 safe folks to do the work that they do.

16 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** All right. You spoke on  
17 the war on Indigenous women.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

19 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Do you believe the  
20 chronic under funding or not funding programs for the  
21 safety of Indigenous women is a tactic of assimilation or  
22 genocide of the governments?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely it is. I  
24 think when we -- when we -- I mean, I gave the stat  
25 yesterday about the shelters, and -- and how many

1 provincial shelters there are just here in Alberta, which  
2 is more than the number of shelters across Canada for First  
3 Nations women. I mean, the disparity is huge. And it  
4 happens, not only in the shelters, but also in -- in the  
5 various other areas that we have talked about in the last  
6 couple of days.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. So where does  
8 this leave reconciliation in this country, if there is a  
9 belief, and I -- I have to say, I share it, because we work  
10 with the people every single day. Where does this leave  
11 reconciliation in this country then, if that is the part of  
12 truth in government?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I -- I am not sure  
14 that reconciliation has begun. I mean, talk is cheap,  
15 right? I mean, we -- we've heard about the 97  
16 recommendations, and I think it was Senator Sinclair who  
17 said, "This is going to be a very difficult process, and  
18 people are going to get really pissed off," he said, "When  
19 these conversations start happening around reconciliation."  
20 So I'm not sure that we have begun to do that. And I -- the  
21 -- the province makes -- not the province, but certainly the  
22 Federal Government also makes those promises where things  
23 will change. But, like an abusive situation, unless there  
24 is a behavioural change, it's not going to happen.

25 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** You also spoke of

1 normalized violence.

2 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: M'hm.

3 MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: So in 2005, I'm just  
4 anecdotally, I'm not submitting anything, which is now  
5 already 13 years ago. I conducted a study in Saskatchewan  
6 where when we first entered a community, both on and off  
7 reserve, women stated that only three out of ten of them  
8 experienced violence. After our education seminar, we sat  
9 and we talked, then number jumped to ten out of ten.

10 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

11 MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Do you believe very basic  
12 education and then services after to support the woman, are  
13 essential for healing for women?

14 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Absolutely. I think it's  
15 critical to -- to saving lives and to reducing the incidents  
16 of violence in our communities across the country.

17 MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you very much for  
18 answering my questions.

19 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

20 SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:

21 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. BEAUDIN:

22 MS. ERICA BEAUDIN: Thank you. Now, I'm  
23 really going to butcher this, so please help me out.

24 *Niawen'kó:wa*, is Hodinohso:ni for thank you.

25 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: *Niawen'kó:wa*.

1                   **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Oh.

2                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I was looking --  
3                   *Niawen'kó:wa.*

4                   **(LAUGHTER)**

5                   **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** *Niawen'kó:wa.* Okay.  
6                   Thank you, Ms. Montour for your presentation yesterday.  
7                   Yesterday, you discussed how staff in our helping agencies  
8                   have to be everything from teachers to spiritual guides. I  
9                   can attest to this as well. In the absence of a monetary  
10                  windfall, with unlimited positions, how do we as EDs, or  
11                  executive directors, or board members support the technical  
12                  or cultural training, especially, because we basically don't  
13                  get any money for professional development for our staff, so  
14                  they can feel comfortable in all of those areas that they  
15                  end up providing for our people?

16                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, I think, on the  
17                  reserve anyway, we have at Six Nations, we have -- we have  
18                  our resource centre, which is filled with our traditional  
19                  Chiefs and our faith keepers, and they help us. So they --  
20                  they'll come and help us any time we -- we ask for help. We  
21                  -- I've -- of course, I would never ask them to come and do  
22                  that for free. So that's, you know, I would pay them the  
23                  same -- the same cost I would pay, like, a psychologist.  
24                  There's no way I'm going to underpay them to come. We -- we  
25                  pay them very well for their time.



1           And -- so we, at this point in time, we were  
2           very creative. I agree, I heard that word a few times. We  
3           have to be creative. And what we did, because we -- we see  
4           the need for a cultural resource person. So what we did is  
5           we -- we did get on the -- the mini-proposals that I wrote  
6           last year, I wrote over \$2 million of proposals last year.  
7           It's all I did and brought that into Ganohkwasra. And I was  
8           able to hire a cultural resource person who is -- his  
9           numbers that he -- he helps every single unit. I mean, I  
10          was even thinking I should have brought him here with me,  
11          you know, as -- as I come out here. But he helps every  
12          single unit. And from being at the Youth Lodge with the  
13          kids, to being in a shelter, to going into groups. You  
14          know, so he's all over the place. But it would be nice to  
15          have him full-time. You know, we need people like this.  
16          And paid well.

17                   **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

18                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Paid well for the  
19          knowledge that he has. He's -- he's been raised in  
20          immersion, and he's been raised in the culture. And he's  
21          well respected in the community. And he needs to be paid  
22          well. And so -- you know, it would be nice for every single  
23          shelter to have a cultural resource person such as this.  
24          You know, and not have to, you know, this person is only  
25          here on a contract basis, unfortunately, as many of our good

1 programs are. That -- then -- then they're gone. And it's  
2 just a tease for our people. But I really strongly believe  
3 in the value, especially in this field, where people are  
4 searching. The value of having that type of leadership and  
5 that type of guidance for, not only our staff, but also our  
6 -- our participants.

7 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you. How do you  
8 believe that the voice of the people we serve, the women and  
9 children, be included in the criteria as well as the  
10 reporting for the funding of us as CBOs? And how do we all  
11 remain accountable to the people we serve?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Can you repeat that?

13 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** How do you believe the  
14 voice of the people, so the people to have a voice, be  
15 included in criteria for -- so for criteria for -- criteria  
16 for funding, as well as the reporting, how we report back as  
17 to successes or determinants of success for our funding?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I like the narrative  
19 approach. I really night -- like, the idea of -- rather  
20 than, you know, writing the reports, I like the -- I like to  
21 hear from the people themselves. Like, I say -- shared  
22 yesterday, we do our own internal shelter review. And I get  
23 to sit with the people myself.

24 **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And -- and I get to hear

1        what their evaluation is of our shelter. You know, and --  
2        and so I -- I -- I'd like to hear -- I appreciate the  
3        narrative approach, the story telling. You know, the  
4        numbers speak for themselves. If we have 300 in our  
5        community attending community events, for us on -- on  
6        reserve, that's a lot. And, you know, what funders tend to  
7        do is they tend to say, "We want something different now."  
8        We -- you've been doing that over and over again. But what  
9        they don't get is, 300, that's successful. Why change  
10       what's working? But -- so sometimes funders have a  
11       different approach, you know.

12                    And so -- and I -- I believe in sharing too.  
13        We have Hodinohso:ni communities right around us. Oneida's  
14        just down the road. Tyendinaga, Akwesasne, and I -- I --  
15        what I try to do is, we try to partner with each other. And  
16        we try to -- I want to know what's successful in their  
17        territories so I can do it in mine. You know, so I really  
18        like the idea of us taking the time to -- to network with  
19        each other. That's really vital.

20                    **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** M'hm.

21                    **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And support each other.  
22        It -- we can't do this work alone, we just can't.

23                    **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Okay. So thank you.

24                    **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Thank  
25        you, Ms. Beaudin.

1                   **MS. ERICA BEAUDIN:** Thank you to everyone on  
2 the panel today.

3                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** At this point, I  
4 would like to request a 15-minute break.

5                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes.  
6 We'll resume at 10:50.

7                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

8                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Five zero.

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's not lunch yet?

10                  **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No. I know.

11 --- Upon recessing at 10:36 a.m.

12 --- Upon reconvening at 10:58 a.m.

13 **NAKuset, Previously Affirmed:**

14 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

15                  **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** ... throughout Canada  
16 are at risk.

17                  **NAKuset:** Yes.

18                  **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that you  
19 have little to no ability to have a say in how much funding  
20 your shelter gets from year to year?

21                  **NAKuset:** Yes.

22                  **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that the  
23 funding that you do get, is a function of what you got the  
24 year before, as opposed to the needs and services that the  
25 Indigenous women who come to your shelter require?

1                   **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

2                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** You have been in the  
3 area of shelters for 20 to 30 years?

4                   **NAKUSET:** Me?

5                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Yes.

6                   **NAKUSET:** Only 20. Since 1999.

7                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Only 20, okay.

8                   **NAKUSET:** I'm not that old.

9                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

10                   **NAKUSET:** Not that anyone else here is  
11 either.

12                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Has anyone from the  
13 funders come to you and said to you, "You are an expert in  
14 shelters, what do we need to give you in terms of budget  
15 lines, to help you do your work?"

16                   **NAKUSET:** Never.

17                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Do you think that that  
18 failure to ask you, and the other panel members, about your  
19 input as experts in the area of shelters is a critical  
20 error?

21                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

22                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that  
23 women, Indigenous women who come to your shelter for  
24 protection for themselves and their children, quiet often  
25 attract the bureaucracy of Child and Family Services?

1                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

2                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And is it fair to say  
3 that, today, Indigenous women who come to protect themselves  
4 and their children, as a result of coming to shelter, may in  
5 fact, put themselves and their children at risk of being  
6 separated?

7                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

8                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that  
9 the lives of Indigenous women should not be dictated by the  
10 particular line -- on a budget line, in an application for  
11 funding?

12                   **NAKUSET:** Sorry. Am I -- again, I'm --

13                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Oh, sorry. That's a  
14 combo --

15                   **NAKUSET:** Is that a yes or no?

16                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say --

17                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

18                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- that the lives of  
19 Indigenous women should not be a function of -- of budget  
20 line on an application for funding?

21                   **NAKUSET:** They shouldn't be a budget line.

22                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Is it fair to say that  
23 in doing your work, you have to move those budget lines  
24 around in order to pay your workers?

25                   **NAKUSET:** You know, I don't know, and --

1 necessarily if it's to pay our workers, because I do have a  
2 budget line for that. But there are other services that I  
3 need that I have to move around. So, yeah, the other budget  
4 categories that we have to -- you know, like I talked about  
5 emergency funds for outreach, we don't have that in our  
6 budget, so I have to find other things that we haven't spent  
7 and put it over there so that we can.

8 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Would you agree that the  
9 complexity of Indigenous women -- women coming to shelter  
10 today is much more complex than it was 20 years ago?

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. I think that there's always  
12 emerging issues that grow. So we've -- as soon as we see  
13 them, then we address them, and then we have to create new  
14 programs because of it.

15 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But these new programs  
16 that you create are not a function of the funding that you  
17 get?

18 **NAKUSET:** No.

19 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The main thing that you  
20 get for funding is what you got the year before?

21 **NAKUSET:** Yes. Basically, a roof over our  
22 head, food, and certain stuff.

23 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And whatever policy is  
24 in place with respect to Indigenous culture, you don't get  
25 asked those questions at the time of funding?

1                   **NAKUSET:** No.

2                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And art therapy --

3                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

4                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- is not on your budget  
5 line?

6                   **NAKUSET:** No.

7                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But art therapy can save  
8 the life of an Indigenous child or woman, by allowing them  
9 to speak their voice about their trauma?

10                   **NAKUSET:** Well, draw their voice.

11 But --

12                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Yes. Pardon me. And  
13 when you testified about the cooperation, or lack of  
14 cooperation by the police --

15                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

16                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- would it be fair to  
17 say that whether police buy into the concept of shelters is  
18 not an option but a mandate?

19                   **NAKUSET:** It should be.

20                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And when the police  
21 disrespect you and the work that you were trying to do, they  
22 disrespect, across the nation, the lives of Indigenous women  
23 and the lives of Indigenous children?

24                   **NAKUSET:** Yes. And I'd even say Indigenous  
25 men as well.



1                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. And without  
2 beating this point to death, there is not enough funding for  
3 shelters across the nation?

4                   **NAKUSET:** No. There should be, though.

5                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And there is not enough  
6 sustainable funding to allow you, in your work, to make the  
7 lives of Indigenous women and children better over time?

8                   **NAKUSET:** If I had the adequate funding, I  
9 would probably be more at the shelter. But instead, I have  
10 a tendency to be running around the city and trying to find  
11 more monies, create new programs, so it definitely takes  
12 away.

13                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And is there a  
14 disconnect between the silos of money that you see for women  
15 with addiction problems versus women in shelters versus  
16 women with mental health issues?

17                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

18                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And yet, the women who  
19 come to your shelter are not segregated by those individual  
20 issues. They come with all of those issues?

21                   **NAKUSET:** That's right.

22                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** But they are funded  
23 separately, as if they were separate human beings?

24                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

25                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And that is

1 fundamentally unfair?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

3 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** I believe you said that  
4 the system doesn't want to change?

5 **NAKUSET:** No.

6 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The system was there  
7 before you came to the world of shelters?

8 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

9 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And who made that system  
10 up, you have no idea?

11 **NAKUSET:** The government.

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Good point. But that  
13 system runs, in your view, independently of the actual needs  
14 of Indigenous women and children?

15 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And the lives of  
17 Indigenous women and children should not depend on a  
18 bureaucratic machine?

19 **NAKUSET:** No.

20 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Because the lives of  
21 women and children of the Indigenous culture deserve the  
22 very best that Canada can bring them?

23 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

24 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And whether that is by  
25 province or by nation, they deserve every bit of funding

1 dollar that they receive and much more?

2 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I think we should get it by  
3 province and by Canada as a nation. Yeah. I think we  
4 should be double-dipping.

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And in terms of healing,  
6 if you do not know your past, you cannot know your future.  
7 That is to say -- and I'll just rephrase the question. If  
8 you don't know your own culture and the story of your own  
9 culture, it's difficult to move forward when you talk to  
10 your own children about who they are?

11 **NAKUSET:** Okay. Well, now you're making a  
12 personal -- I mean, I'm part of the Sixties Scoop, so I  
13 don't know much about my own culture.

14 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Fair enough.

15 **NAKUSET:** But I am, you know, trying. So I  
16 think that you have to, sort of, do your research. You  
17 know, I mean, Lac La Ronge Indian Band has beautiful  
18 websites, so I gave my kids, you know, Cree names. I didn't  
19 call them "Bucket." I -- I, you know, I looked at the  
20 website and I found appropriate names like Makisis (ph),  
21 Mahikan (ph), and Kisstine (ph).

22 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Believe me, I -- I mean  
23 no disrespect. What I'm saying is that Indigenous-led  
24 shelters, provide that culture to --

25 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

1                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- their participants.

2                   **NAKUSET:** We try. I think at the Native  
3 Women's Shelter, you know, we -- there's 11 different  
4 Nations, plus all the other communities that come across  
5 Canada. So we have a really large group of people that  
6 come. We can't cater to every one single culture, but we --  
7 we do our best.

8                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. My next  
9 questions are for Ms. Nepinak.

10 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

11 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

12                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Ms. Nepinak, how many  
13 -- I -- I think in your evidence, you said that you receive  
14 core funding for 32 beds from the province; is that fair?

15                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

16                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Does that mean that  
17 there are 32 Indigenous women who require the assistance of  
18 a shelter?

19                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, there are many, many  
20 Indigenous women in this province that require sheltering  
21 that are turned away every day.

22                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Do you know where the  
23 number 32 came from, in terms of how you get funding?

24                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, partially, it's --  
25 it's on the size of the building, and partially, it's on the

1 need of the organization that is determined, again, by the  
2 Province of Alberta. There are other emergency shelters  
3 within the city -- within the City of Calgary, and so some  
4 of those other shelters are -- are bigger than we are. They  
5 may have 40 to some -- the other has 50 beds.

6 And they determine, well, we -- you had 27  
7 beds, so we're going to invest this many millions of dollars  
8 into family violence, and therefore we're going to -- you  
9 know, you get a piece of that pie. And -- and they look at  
10 what our numbers, our statistics, are, because we're, you  
11 know, more than 90 percent capacity, you need extra beds.  
12 So it's just recently that we got the extra core funding for  
13 32 beds.

14 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Can you say how many  
15 Indigenous women and children need help of your shelter  
16 across the province today?

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Let's start with across  
18 the province. Yesterday, I gave a statistic that, in 2015-  
19 2016, one of the provincial bodies that release the stats  
20 indicated that there was -- I -- I had my numbers somewhere  
21 yesterday, but there were 16,385 women and children that  
22 were turned away from shelters in the Province of Alberta.  
23 And so if we factor the fact that 65 percent of the women  
24 that are going into shelters are Indigenous, that number --  
25 and I haven't done the math, but it's approximately, 10,000

1 women in 2015-2016, that were turned away from shelters.  
2 Now, if we look at Awo Taan Healing Lodge, we -- we have  
3 more than 600 women that are turned away each year from Awo  
4 Taan Healing Lodge, women and children.

5 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** So province-wide, that  
6 means that by being turned away, approximately 10,000  
7 Indigenous women --

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** -- are at risk of being  
10 murdered today.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

12 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And what that means is  
13 that the children of 10,000 Indigenous women will lose their  
14 parent or parents as the result of a funding issue.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** As opposed to a  
17 fundamental human right.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct.

19 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

20 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** My next questions are  
21 for Ms. Montour.

22 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

23 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. DUNN:**

24 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Ms. Montour, in your  
25 evidence, if I heard you correctly, you stated that 95

1 percent of women who attend shelter have experienced sexual  
2 assault.

3 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

4 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Are you funded to deal  
5 with the trauma that your women have as a result of being  
6 sexually assaulted?

7 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: We just received funding  
8 in -- we just started our sexual assault program as of,  
9 actually, we just opened it two weeks ago.

10 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

11 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: So we hadn't been prior.

12 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: All right. And what  
13 percentage of women who attend your shelter have addiction  
14 issues? Can you say?

15 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: I can't say. When I  
16 talked about the 95 percent, I was referring to the whole  
17 organization. Not just shelter, but our outreach services.

18 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: Okay.

19 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Addictions, for -- I --  
20 I would have to talk to my shelter staff. They would have a  
21 better idea of that than I.

22 MS. CATHERINE DUNN: But it's fair to say  
23 that many, many women who come to shelter have addiction  
24 issues.

25 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: That's fair to say, yes.

1                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And it's very fair to  
2 say that -- say that women who come to shelters have mental  
3 health issues as a result of the trauma that they have  
4 received outside of that shelter?

5                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

6                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And a woman who comes to  
7 shelter with trauma often faces a new trauma in that Child  
8 and Family Services may come and take her children.

9                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

10   **(SHORT PAUSE)**

11                   **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** The resources that were  
12 available for shelters 30 years ago haven't changed that  
13 much in 30 years, is that fair?

14                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** For us, we work very  
15 hard to increase our resources, and I think that, when you  
16 think about the world of shelters, what I am -- am aware of  
17 is that shelter, that concept of shelter, that concept came  
18 from a -- middle-class, non-Native women, back in the '60s  
19 and '70s. And then when we had our shelters, First Nations  
20 people, Indigenous people, back in the '80s or '90s, a lot  
21 of our shelters took on that concept, but we didn't. We  
22 always were true to the values of our people as Hodinöhsö:ni  
23 families, rather than just it being specific to women. I  
24 think, throughout the years, we have increased our services  
25 with our -- you know, our core funding has increased over



1 the years, depending on the government. Depending on the  
2 time. I -- I also remember we had our second-stage housing,  
3 we had workers there that were funded, and then the next  
4 government came along and they took away those -- those  
5 funds. So it depends on the government.

6 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** And should the lives of  
7 Indigenous women and children depend on who is in  
8 government? For their protection?

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No.

10 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** I have one last  
11 question, and that is in relation to culture. How important  
12 is the ability to provide culturally appropriate services to  
13 the women who come to your shelter?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** One hundred percent  
15 important.

16 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Thank you. Those are my  
17 questions.

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** *Migwetch.*

19 **MS. CATHERINE DUNN:** Good morning.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms. Dunn.  
21 I would like to invite Ms. Ordyniec on behalf of the  
22 Northern Alliance for Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Treaty 3.  
23 She will have 19 minutes.

24 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIC:** Morning. I'd like to  
25 just begin by acknowledging the traditional territory of

1 Treaty 7 as well as the Métis Nation Region 3 and thank the  
2 Blackfoot people for being so warm, welcoming, and kind  
3 during this difficult week. I'd also like to thank the  
4 panel members on behalf of both Nishnawbe Aski Nation as  
5 well as Grand Council Treaty 3 for all the very important  
6 work that you do.

7 The Northern Treaty Alliance is made up of 77  
8 communities in northern Ontario and eastern -- eastern  
9 Manitoba, and my first questions are going to be directed to  
10 Ms. Montour.

11 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

12 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

13 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Ms. Montour, are you  
14 familiar with the NAN and Treaty 3 territory?

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, I am.

16 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And could  
17 you give us a little bit of your understanding of shelters  
18 in the north?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** What I do know about the  
20 north is that they have -- there needs to be special  
21 attention to the north. Because of the -- the prices are  
22 incredibly high, travel to get -- for women to get into the  
23 shelter, it costs not hundreds of dollars, but thousands of  
24 dollars, because we're talking about a plane -- plane ride.  
25 What I know about the north is they face, you know -- I

1 think I have challenges with our one police, they have  
2 several police that they work with, not just one, and so  
3 they have to try their best to educate those police.

4 What I think of the northern shelters is  
5 they're -- they're single staffed, they're lucky to be  
6 single staffed. That they have -- their director is  
7 usually called a coordinator, even though that director  
8 does the same work as I do, or that coordinator does  
9 exactly the same work as I do.

10 That coordinator is on the phone, she's not  
11 only doing what I'm doing, she's giving out meds, she's  
12 taking shifts, she's doing all those things too. She's  
13 working with the police. What I know about those northern  
14 shelters is I have total utmost respect for them.

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you for your  
16 answer. Would you agree, based on what you said, that safe  
17 places for women to go, for young girls to go in the north,  
18 is in a crisis situation?

19 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

20 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Are you  
21 aware through your work with Aboriginal Shelters of  
22 Ontario, if anyone that is responsible for funding these  
23 shelters has gone to the north to see what the situation is  
24 like?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I'm not aware of that

1 at all.

2 **MS. KRYSYTN ORDYNIEC:** Do you think that  
3 that would be something that you would recommend?

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

5 **MS. KRYSYTN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Are you  
6 familiar with the Family Wellbeing Program?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

8 **MS. KRYSYTN ORDYNIEC:** One of the pillars of  
9 that program is safe housing.

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

11 **MS. KRYSYTN ORDYNIEC:** But it seems that  
12 infrastructure is a barrier. Can you speak on that?

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** What I know about the  
14 north is that, you know, for fly-in communities, that they  
15 have -- it takes years to be able to bring in the material  
16 for the fly-in communities in the north, and that often,  
17 you know, infrastructure is -- is -- it's not easy to come  
18 by, you know, it's -- because of the cold temperatures in  
19 the winters, a lot of the -- by the time they get all the  
20 materials in it's no good, so they're in constant state of  
21 need for infrastructure, or they're being evacuated from  
22 their communities because of various floods and various  
23 weather conditions.

24 So I -- I am aware of the Family Wellbeing  
25 Program and the safe -- the safe -- I guess it's a safe

1 housing component of it.

2 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. Yesterday  
3 you spoke about initiatives, Dorothy McKay in Big Trout and  
4 Margaret Kisik (ph) in Fort Albany, and I wonder if you  
5 could expand on how those initiatives should be extended to  
6 other communities and how we could support that?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Those ladies are  
8 beautiful ladies, I need to say. And with Dorothy, you  
9 know, she's a very hard worker. She's fluent in her  
10 language, as most of them are in their shelter. They speak  
11 their language fluently, and rarely do they speak English,  
12 as a matter of fact.

13 It's -- you know, she -- Dorothy actually  
14 was once on our board of directors for ASO, and we always  
15 so enjoyed her when she came to our meetings. And she  
16 always spoke to us about the culture shock to come from her  
17 community, a fly-in community, and the number of planes it  
18 would take her to get to Toronto, to -- you know, and it  
19 would take her a while to be able to settle into English,  
20 right, but she would share with us the way things were in  
21 her community.

22 And what we have done, and one thing that I  
23 have actually applied for, is we applied to do a shelter  
24 swap. And this was -- what we would like to do is we would  
25 like to bring the north -- the northern shelters, some

1 workers, two workers, to the southern shelters and put them  
2 on the floor with guidance and support.

3 We -- that was approved, but what we wanted  
4 to do was do the opposite, is to take the southern  
5 shelters, two from the southern shelters and send them to  
6 the north because I'd love my staff to go and see what  
7 Dorothy does and be trained by Dorothy. I'd love that.  
8 That would enhance our learning so much. And Margaret.

9 So that -- I guess that was ASO's way of  
10 trying to support our members and trying to overcome that  
11 barrier between the north and the south so that we share  
12 our resources and we honour each other's strengths. So it  
13 was approved one way, but it wasn't approved the other way,  
14 so -- I like that idea.

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And you would agree  
16 with me that you would recommend that that sort of  
17 arrangement be funded as well as supported?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

19 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And as  
20 we're speaking about the north and the visits from workers  
21 in the north, what about the women in your shelters who  
22 have come maybe from the north? Do you have -- do you have  
23 women in your shelters?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And what are the

1 specific -- the specific supports that they would need in  
2 your -- in the more urban setting?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I know for them, I know  
4 it's a culture shock. It's a culture shock for them to  
5 come into the south, so I think that we have to be really  
6 trying to help them with that culture shock to help them to  
7 be safe in our communities.

8 A lot of times, you know, they will say,  
9 wow, you have so much here, you know, you have so much  
10 here, and -- and we do compared to the north, we really do.  
11 But I know that one of the things that they have that a lot  
12 of us in the south don't have, is they have their language  
13 and we are very envious of that.

14 So, you know, in our territory we don't  
15 have -- we don't have Ojibway speakers or we don't have  
16 Cree speakers, but we do have Haudenosaunee speakers.  
17 So -- but usually that's not a big issue, usually everybody  
18 will speak English anyway. But we do, you know, we make  
19 sure we have all the cultural -- what they need culturally.

20 We also have New Credit that's right next  
21 door to us, right next door, that we do access the Ojibway  
22 culture there, so sweats from there as well, to meet the  
23 needs of anybody that's Ojibway.

24 **MS. KRYSZTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. I just  
25 want to turn to the New Beginnings, the Standards for

1 Ontario Indigenous Shelters. And specifically Section 1.1  
2 talks about access criteria.

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

4 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** I'll just read from  
5 the standards: (As Read)

6 Shelter services are for all those who  
7 identify as a person aged 16 years or  
8 older and their dependents who are  
9 experiencing, threatened by and/or  
10 affected by violence or abuse of any  
11 kind.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** And I -- you can  
14 answer the question in respect of all shelters, however  
15 especially with respect to the north. There's a 16-year  
16 age standard, as we've read in here, and we've heard  
17 testimony that young girls 10 and 11 years old are victims  
18 to violence and human trafficking, so I'm wondering if you  
19 can just speak on that?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, I am aware of  
21 some of the shelters from the -- from the Nan territory  
22 that actually are being -- because of that issue, you know,  
23 they're being forced to take in people younger than 16.  
24 So -- and they do, you know, they do, they take in people  
25 younger than 16. Of course, they're working with their



1 child welfare agencies too.

2 And -- and with us at Ganohkwasra, we have  
3 our youth facility that we will -- will assess the  
4 situation. Of course, we're working with child welfare at  
5 that age as well, but we assess the situation. We might  
6 keep them in the shelter for a period of time, but our goal  
7 is to get them into the youth lodge, you know, so -- and,  
8 of course, like I said, working closely with child welfare  
9 with that age group for sure.

10 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank  
11 you for the work that you've done.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Thank you.

13 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

14 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

15 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Ms. Nepinak, I would  
16 just like to ask you one or two questions, if I could.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

18 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** You mentioned peer  
19 support within -- within the lodge, and I wonder how you  
20 facilitate and promote that, and if any of the clients have  
21 become supports or workers in the shelter themselves?

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, there  
23 has been all of that, but we do have some programs that are  
24 specific. For example, on our -- we have two programs,  
25 which is our -- through our outreach program for Monday

1 night healing circle, and this for women that have been in  
2 the shelter, and they -- and that is facilitated by an  
3 Elder and a staff member. But we often have women in  
4 the -- in the circle who lead, for example, what -- what  
5 the discussion might be for the evening and give examples  
6 of that and -- and engage other women to -- to talk about  
7 that. And that usually begins by them speaking about their  
8 own experiences around violence and how they dealt with it.

9 We have another program called Women's  
10 Circle of Safety, and this is a peer support group of women  
11 who come together and say, "Well, this is what I did. Have  
12 you tried this? Have you thought about that? Why don't  
13 I -- why don't I show you or why don't I -- this is  
14 a -- here's some recommendations, here's some books to  
15 read, or have you talked to so-and-so." Those kinds of  
16 peer support happens a lot. And there's a lot of strength  
17 that are -- and the friendships that are developed  
18 as -- as -- as a result of that peer support while in the  
19 shelter often is in the community, as well, where they will  
20 get together. They'll -- you know, they'll babysit for one  
21 another. They'll -- they'll even share groceries and share  
22 family time together, and community and cultural time. So  
23 the peer support and informal supports, I believe, are  
24 very, very critical to -- to the development and to the  
25 healing process of many of the women -- women and children

1 that we serve.

2 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. In -- in  
3 respect of the -- the model that -- yeah, that your -- your  
4 lodge is based on, how do you see that extending to  
5 permanent housing?

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, our -- our  
7 logo -- are -- are you referring to our logo and what it  
8 means?

9 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Just -- just the way  
10 that you run your shelter. Do you see any of those --

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, yeah. Absolutely.  
12 And we are -- our -- our vision statement is "Nurturing  
13 families living in peace." And so if we were -- and -- and  
14 I would love to have a second stage. I mean, we -- there  
15 has been discussion about that, as well, and how we would  
16 extend that is by taking those core values that we have  
17 developed at Awo Taan Healing Lodge through our staff,  
18 through our governance, and through our policies and  
19 procedures to align with -- with our core values as  
20 Indigenous people, and then we carry those into a  
21 transitional home and long-term housing.

22 Now, having said that, that has been an  
23 issue for funders because funders don't understand that we  
24 all have spirit, that we all have the need for -- to -- to  
25 have the Elders in their lives, to have spirit and wisdom

1 be part of our growth and development. And -- and it also  
2 means that we can keep a house around us if we're  
3 spiritually strong.

4 **MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank  
5 you for all of your work.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

7 **NAKuset, Previously Affirmed:**

8 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ORDYNIEC:**

9 **MS. KRYSZYN ORDYNIEC:** Nakuset, I'd just  
10 like to ask you one question. You identified allies, and  
11 we've heard testimony throughout these hearings about the  
12 importance of non-Indigenous allies to the work that you  
13 do. And besides funding, if, you know -- besides if they  
14 could give you everything you want, what are the things  
15 that you need in terms of non-Indigenous allies?

16 **NAKuset:** I think that non-Indigenous allies  
17 can also lobby, right? So I remember in -- in Montreal,  
18 you know, I hosted a rally for Tina Fontaine, and there was  
19 a lot of people that came, and a lot of them were  
20 non-Indigenous. And I was, like, you should -- you should  
21 also do something about this. I mean, we are here because  
22 we are outraged, but you need to also go to your government  
23 and say that change has to be made.

24 So I think that's what we need to do,  
25 because sometimes our allies are taken more seriously than

1 the angry Indians that are, like -- you know, we got  
2 another letter from her. Oh, wait. We got a letter from  
3 this lovely non-Indigenous woman. Hey, maybe we should  
4 listen to her. It's just a different perspective. And I  
5 think there's power in that.

6 So I think people need to, you know, use  
7 their -- their power if they want to, if they really  
8 believe in, you know, helping the Indigenous population.  
9 That's what they should do, as well.

10 **MS. KRISTYN ORDYNIEC:** Thank you. And thank  
11 you for all the work that you do, and thank you to the  
12 Commission. Those are my questions.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,  
14 Ms. Ordyniec.

15 The Commission would like to invite up next  
16 Ms. Virginia Lomax on behalf of Native Women's Association  
17 of Canada. Ms. Lomax will have 19 minutes.

18 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** Good morning. I want  
19 to first thank the Blackfoot nation, Treaty 7, and Métis  
20 Region 3 for welcoming us to their territory today. I want  
21 to recognize the sacred items in the room with us and the  
22 Elders for their prayers. I'd also like to thank everybody  
23 who has come here today to fight for Indigenous women and  
24 girls and the two-spirit LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse people  
25 in a good way today.

1 I'm going to start by saying that I  
2 am -- I'm not completely comfortable cross-examining the  
3 witnesses because you are all the solution. Your work is  
4 the solution, and you fight the problem every day. You are  
5 not the barrier to success or the problem, and you and your  
6 work are the solution. And I wish I could be  
7 cross-examining the barriers and the problems. But today  
8 I'm not.

9 And so I'd like to give you my time today  
10 instead. I have one question that I would like to ask each  
11 of the witnesses, and you can take as much time or as  
12 little time as you would like to answer.

13 You've all spoken about chronic underfunding  
14 and a chronic lack of empathy and understanding from many  
15 people, including those who make funding decisions. And  
16 I'd like to give you my time. If you would like to ask  
17 your own questions to these people on the record, are there  
18 any questions or issues that you need answered or addressed  
19 that aren't being answered or addressed that you would like  
20 on the public record?

21 I don't mean to cause any harm by asking  
22 this question. I just want to give you time for your truth.

23 **JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, Previously**

24 **Affirmed:**

1 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. LOMAX:

2 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I -- I -- yeah. Thank  
3 you for -- for the question. Can I start?

4 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Please.

5 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: Do you understand what  
6 you're being asked?

7 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: I believe I understand  
8 what I'm being asked.

9 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: We just want to make sure  
10 she understands what she's being asked.

11 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Can you tell me, then?

12 MR. DARRIN BLAIN: She can tell you again.

13 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Okay.

14 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: Are there questions or  
15 issues that you need answered or addressed that you're not  
16 getting answers --

17 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

18 MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX: -- that you would like  
19 on the public record today?

20 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Yes. You know,  
21 with -- with respect to funding, you've all heard the story  
22 about our chronic underfunding and the need to develop more  
23 safe housing or safe housing models across the country, and  
24 in particular, First Nations. I mean, the disparity is

1 huge, and the need to -- to fund -- it doesn't matter where  
2 you are, whether you're in Calgary or whether you're in the  
3 far North or -- or you're in the east. The funding should  
4 be at parity, and the supports and the services, I'd like  
5 to see, again, Elders as an essential component to any  
6 funding model.

7 Increased supports for -- for women who are  
8 transitioning from the north and into -- into southern  
9 parts of the country, and -- and having safe places  
10 for -- for the women so that they can have community  
11 supports, whether they're outreach or community settlement  
12 programs where they become acquainted with their new  
13 community, their -- their grocery store, where the doctor's  
14 office is, where the school is, where the recreational  
15 facilities are, and where the cultural supports might be.  
16 I think that's really important, as well.

17 I'd also like to say that with regards to  
18 the justice system and fairness and respect and equity to  
19 Indigenous women -- for example, I'd like to mention Judge  
20 Queen's Bench Robert Graesser who, on the Cindy Gladue  
21 case, conducted himself in an unacceptable way where he  
22 referred to Ms. Gladue as, you know, for example, that  
23 prostitute or that Native -- that Native girl, you know,  
24 that kind of thing. And that I believe that he should be



1 reviewed by the Judicial Council of Canada. I'd like to  
2 see that happen.

3 I'd also like to see folks like Judge Robin  
4 Camp who said to the Indigenous girl, "Why couldn't you  
5 keep your knees together?"

6 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** M'hm.

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so he has been  
8 reinstated to practice law here in Alberta. And -- and the  
9 recommendation would be we need to have more Indigenous  
10 judges, both men and women, who have the lived experience,  
11 but also are the lawyers, who -- who can represent us in a  
12 fair and equitable way with respect and dignity in the  
13 courthouses.

14 I have more, but I'm going to pass that  
15 down now. *Migwetch.*

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Now, if -- for the  
17 question and the time, I would like to say, I think, just  
18 from the last person that came up, I would, like, definitely  
19 agree that there needs to be more funding to our Northern  
20 communities. They have special needs. Really, there should  
21 be somebody here from the north speaking for themselves,  
22 because the -- I'm probably not doing them any justice. I  
23 do the best I can, but there needs to be more funding to the  
24 north. You know, in -- in Ontario, there's shelters that  
25 are funded by many, many ministries, and every shelter

1 should have that opportunity to be core funded by many  
2 ministries, not just one.

3 So shelters should certainly be funded and we  
4 should not be having waitlists, you know. Waitlists are --  
5 they're not the answer. They're not the solution. Like I  
6 said, we have a waitlist right now. I can tell you we have  
7 a waitlist of 30 women, waiting for a counselor right now,  
8 and 20 men, and -- and anywhere from 20 to 30 children are  
9 waiting for counselors. That's not -- that's not good. So  
10 we should be getting funded so that we don't have these  
11 waitlists. We -- people are ready for counselling and  
12 they're ready to -- for support and -- and -- and the  
13 government needs to pay for that.

14 I strongly agree with the cultural resource  
15 people. We, you know, we need -- we need our cultural  
16 resource people, and they need to be properly funded, and  
17 instead of, you know, I -- I spend so much of my time  
18 looking for money, begging for money, applying for money,  
19 writing reports, and then the -- those are only temporary  
20 fundings. You know? They're just temporary money, then  
21 they're gone in a year and the people are -- my community  
22 say, you know, that's just a tease, you know? We're --  
23 we're -- and they're complaining, you know, that -- that  
24 service is gone. It's not a solution. You know, just these  
25 temporary pockets of money that make us compete with each

1 other, by the way. And that -- that's not good practice,  
2 either.

3 No shelter should be single-staffed. There  
4 should be, you know, we're -- we're -- this is a high-risk  
5 field. It's a high-risk business, you know. People are,  
6 you know, there's certain -- there's things that can happen  
7 in shelters that are very high-risk, so no shelter should be  
8 single-staffed. It's -- there should be more funding that  
9 allow us to properly staff our -- our floor so that we're  
10 not putting our -- our -- the lives of our own people at  
11 risk. Being in shelter, we're doing this work.

12 Definitely funding parity. I'm really --  
13 it's very upsetting, you know. There was a question  
14 somebody asked, how much your staff make. Well, we -- we  
15 start our staff, up until last year, we started our staff at  
16 35,000. That's how much we'd pay for our staff. We had  
17 staff there for 20 years making \$35,000 a year. That's  
18 discrimination. So we've been able to raise that to 40,000,  
19 and I'm -- I'm very pleased with that, but I'm aware that  
20 there's shelters out there that belong to our organization  
21 that are making \$25,000. That's not right. Mainstream  
22 shelters, they're making, 50, 60, 75,000, that's more than I  
23 make, for frontline work. I can't say enough how passionate  
24 I am, the unfairness, the injustice, and I can't help but  
25 wonder, is this because we're an Indigenous women field,

1 that we get treated like this?

2 I also need to speak about -- the funding  
3 needs to go to the shelters. Being on-reserve, like I said,  
4 we have -- we're very lucky. We're -- have the support of  
5 our amazing Chief Hill, amazing Chief and council. We have  
6 the support of our Hodinohso:ni Confederacy. We're very  
7 fortunate. But I am -- I'm aware that there's other on-  
8 reserve shelters where the funding goes to their -- their  
9 chief and council, who are predominantly male, and they take  
10 their shelter funding and they use it to develop their roads  
11 or they use it for something else, and it takes away from  
12 the women in their community whose lives are -- whose -- who  
13 -- who are dying. So I really want to speak strongly about  
14 those shelters who are, you know, they're -- our own are  
15 hurting us. And I -- and I'm -- and I'm not blaming that.  
16 Just -- it's colonization, that's what it is. It's -- if  
17 there's any anger in me, it's towards colonization. I know  
18 how things are. So I think that money needs to go  
19 specifically to the shelters and there needs to be some  
20 accountability to ensure that it's going to the women and  
21 the children and the families in the -- in the shelters.

22 Yeah. I -- I think I -- I think I got  
23 everything there. Thank you.

24 **NAKUSET:** So if we could have more funding, I  
25 would like to see more monies for -- and I'm going to talk

1 more about the community as a whole, not necessarily just  
2 the shelter, because, you know, we're a women's shelter, but  
3 we don't service men except through our outreach for Cabot  
4 Square, but I think there needs to be almost like an  
5 empowerment fund. So that we can find the strength in each  
6 Indigenous individual and -- and help them develop that  
7 strength.

8 I think we need more funding for education in  
9 Quebec, because the schools, elementary and high school,  
10 there's no -- okay, there's a teeny-tiny bit of Indigenous  
11 education in the -- in the books, in the history books, but  
12 it is -- it is really incredibly sad. I think that we need  
13 to have more monies for the lawyers in terms of, again,  
14 education. They have, you know, the Gladue reports that are  
15 not being utilized by the lawyers. They find it too hard to  
16 fill out, but it's the law, and they don't even abide to the  
17 own law, so that's a problem. The racism in Montreal is  
18 humongous. There needs to be more funding in, you know, a  
19 racism team, the same thing with discrimination.

20 We need a wet shelter in Montreal. We need a  
21 place where people that are under the influence, that aren't  
22 able to access shelters because they drink, and have a safe  
23 place where they have, you know, people working there, still  
24 giving out small amounts of alcohol so that they don't go  
25 into shock, and also have a component of addiction so that

1 when they're ready to start talking about it, but also to  
2 keep them off the streets, because that's when the police  
3 come and arrest them or the violence happens. So we've been  
4 asking for that for four years, and now the City of Montreal  
5 is like, okay, so we're going to do a study. And it's like,  
6 I'm sorry, Canada already has ten studies. You need to do  
7 another study? Stop studying it. Implement it now. And  
8 they're not doing it, so again, they don't like me too much,  
9 because this is how I talk to them. But it's going to  
10 happen soon.

11 Education across the board, so -- and this is  
12 also education for First Nations. We don't have enough.  
13 You know, we want to educate our people so that they can be  
14 the lawyers and doctors and psychologists and, you know, a  
15 lot of the -- the funding restrictions, those that are part  
16 of the Sixties Scoop, they don't have their status, they  
17 can't get monies to go to school.

18 So programming for kids in care. So all of  
19 those kids in the foster care system, there's all kinds of  
20 programming we can do that -- that could be tailor-made. We  
21 had a program called Ronathahi:io. Don't you have one  
22 called that, too? Yeah. So it means -- yeah, or "the good  
23 path." That's how I understood it. "The good path" in  
24 Mohawk. And we wanted to make it like a Big Brother/Big  
25 Sister program, so if we can match Indigenous community

1 members with the -- the children in care and they would  
2 spend time with them -- time with them within a year and  
3 give them that sort of cultural pride, even if it's not the  
4 same nation, they would still have, sort of, empathy and  
5 they would -- I'm pretty sure, you know, they would learn  
6 the culture in order to teach a child about it. I think  
7 that would be great. And we've already tried to apply it a  
8 couple of years, but we only have a tiny bit of funding for  
9 it, so.

10           And then institutional accountability, and I  
11 actually talked about that checklist that the shelters do.  
12 Well, let's do that for all of society. We go into every  
13 single organization, we, like, "Checklist ladies here.  
14 We're going to see, are you -- have you been, you know,  
15 racist? You know, have you -- do you know your education?  
16 Can you mention a couple of the TRCs?" Like, let's -- let's  
17 force people to -- I don't know. I know "force", you don't  
18 like that word, but let's hold people accountable. And, you  
19 know, have the residents -- this is my favorite -- have the  
20 residents review each service. You go to the hospital,  
21 someone takes you aside, "How did you like your services?  
22 Were you treated fairly? Were you treated in a -- were  
23 they -- you know, were they kind to you? Did they speak to  
24 you in a -- in a rude way?" You wouldn't believe the kind  
25 of stuff that we hear. So that would be Youth Protection,

1 police, schools, Welfare. Sometimes I send -- you know, the  
2 women go to Welfare and they're told, "Go to the Immigration  
3 office." Really? So, yeah, there you go. There's my list.

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** One more thing, if I  
5 can -- if I can ask, please? I would like to see a  
6 national -- whether it's a forum or a national network of  
7 Indigenous women's shelters across this country, whether  
8 we're on the reserve or whether we're in an urban setting,  
9 but there is a -- a huge gap in the fact, and there is a  
10 lot of knowledge and information and sharing because we  
11 don't get together. We -- I mean, this is a wonderful  
12 opportunity for us to -- to talk and share about our  
13 problems, but there's much more than that. I mean, I'm  
14 very interested in the great work that both are doing, but  
15 after the -- the end of the day, we may never see each  
16 other again.

17 But there -- so there is a need to -- to  
18 support and fund a gathering of -- of shelter directors or  
19 shelters to come together and resource -- and -- and  
20 further to that, even to talk about developing a -- a  
21 database so that we can share information across the  
22 country. You know, currently we use Outcome Tracker, and I  
23 know that that can be used across the country, but it needs  
24 to be revised to -- to include some of the questions  
25 that -- in some of the areas that we're concerned about



1 today. And again, we have no money. I mean, just to set  
2 that up, we -- it's five to seven thousand dollars, and  
3 that was ten years ago. So today, it would be much more.  
4 And then to maintain that and then to have people maintain  
5 that. So on and on and on. But there is a way  
6 for -- there is a need for us to -- to do more talking.

7 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** Thank you.

8 **NAKUSET:** Sorry. And travel monies so we  
9 can do this, and as well as to have, like, women's wellness  
10 conferences. Like, in the United States, that once we went  
11 as the Native Women's Shelter, and then we couldn't find  
12 the monies again to do it. But that's really great for the  
13 staff to, you know, sort of get best practices. And also,  
14 you know, if we have, like, more money, we can bring the  
15 residents so they can also see. So, yeah. Funding, like,  
16 a whole big chunk for, you know, travel so we can go and  
17 visit other shelters. And, you know, let's go to Australia  
18 and New Zealand as well and see what they're doing down  
19 there. I mean, they're doing good work too, so ...

20 **MS. VIRGINIA LOMAX:** You still have 40  
21 seconds.

22 **(LAUGHTER)**

23 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would like to see us  
24 fund our retreats. We do -- we do amazing retreats at  
25 Ganohkwasra. We work with the family. We do women

1       retreats. We do family retreats. I would like to see  
2       those funded as a regular part of our core services that we  
3       provide. I'd also like to see us for -- funded for  
4       homelessness, as well. That's a whole different area. But  
5       I know many shelters, we take -- we as Indigenous shelters,  
6       we take them in, but in the mainstream, there's shelters  
7       specific for homelessness. But there we are again,  
8       stretching just because the need is there. We're doing it,  
9       and we're not getting paid for it.

10               **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,  
11       Ms. Lomax. I would like the Commissioners' instruction on  
12       this. It's now 10 to 12. We could call the next party.  
13       They would have 23 minutes. Or we could break for lunch  
14       and maybe come back a little early from lunch.

15               **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We'll  
16       stop now, and we will resume at 1:50, one-five-zero.

17               **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry. I think  
18       you're -- sorry.

19               **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You're  
20       right. (Indiscernible).

21               **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, that's okay. So  
22       we can resume at 12:50? So it's a one-hour lunch, resuming  
23       at 12:50. Thank you.

24                               **(SHORT PAUSE)**

25               **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Rule 48 now means

1 that Mr. Blain and myself cannot be speaking to the  
2 witnesses about the content of their evidence. That's not  
3 a prohibition on talking to them. It's just we're not  
4 allowed to talk to the content. It's the inverse of the  
5 earlier part of the rule that was in place during the  
6 examination-in-chief, and I just want the record to show  
7 that. Thanks.

8 --- Upon recessing at 11:53 a.m.

9 --- Upon reconvening at 1:05 p.m.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We're going to get  
11 started again, please.

12 Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, I would  
13 like to invite the next party to come into  
14 cross-examination, that will be the Assembly of Manitoba  
15 Chiefs, Ms. Joelle Pastora Sala.

16 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** All  
17 right.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And the AMC has 23.5  
19 minutes. Let's give them a moment to give you your 30  
20 seconds.

21 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Good afternoon,  
22 Commissioners, Elders, family members, survivors. My name  
23 is it Joelle Pastora Sala, I'm counsel to the Assembly of  
24 Manitoba Chiefs. And before I begin my questioning I just  
25 wanted to thank the Blackfoot Nation as well as the Métis

1 Nation of Alberta Region number 3 for hosting us this week.  
2 I will likely have to leave right after my questioning  
3 today, but I mean no disrespect. I have -- I have a flight  
4 to catch.

5 Good afternoon, panel members, I want to  
6 thank you all for your presentations, as well as for all of  
7 your work. Just as counsel to NWAC, I -- I also feel  
8 uncomfortable with the term "cross-examination," so what I  
9 will be doing here today is respectfully asking you  
10 questions. And just for clarification, there's a few  
11 questions that I'd like to pick up on and areas of  
12 questions, and so my questions may not seem like they make  
13 much order because I'm kind of picking here and there from  
14 what my colleagues have done.

15 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:**

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Ms. Montour, I'd  
18 like to start with you. I'd like to begin by asking you  
19 questions relating to the financial reporting requirements,  
20 and again picking up on that theme. Can you outline the  
21 types of information you have to provide in reporting?

22 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can try, but my  
23 financial person is the one that does it, but I can -- I  
24 think I have a good sense of it.

25 One of the things that we always have to do

1 is we have to have our data, so they want to know the  
2 number of safety plans that we use, that we did that month  
3 or that quarter, the number of -- they ask a number of  
4 specific statistic questions, so -- and that has to be  
5 reported to our -- to our funder.

6 And, of course, they want to know any  
7 variances, so any -- any surplus or any deficits. And they  
8 want -- they want an explanation as to what the variance  
9 was about, and they want to make sure that a certain  
10 percentage is -- for example, under allocated admin, they  
11 want that percentage always calculated into every -- every  
12 report as well.

13 So basically you have your budget at the  
14 beginning of your fiscal and then your -- that's divided  
15 into your quarterly reports, and any variances within that  
16 budget, they want to know details as to what that's about.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And that  
18 information that you've just outlined, do you outline it in  
19 a form or what -- what does it actually look like, what  
20 you're producing?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Excel spreadsheet. And  
22 then -- and then what we have to do is we usually have to  
23 do it on a secure -- like a One Key it's called or  
24 a -- like, it's a secure email with the Ministry. And  
25 often what happens is those cells don't work and it

1 causes -- it's a lot of -- you know, it's a lot -- it's a  
2 very tedious process and it's a lot of frustration for my  
3 admin people, as well as I'm sure for their admin people  
4 when things go wrong or when an agency does not have the  
5 proper -- the proper data. Because sometimes -- that was  
6 one of our problems, is our data, because we didn't have  
7 money to update our computer software, we weren't able to  
8 get these -- do these reports, so we had to spend money to  
9 make sure our equipment was operating -- updated so we  
10 could do these reports. That's for one funder.

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And then we -- you  
13 know, we have our INAC funding as well, and  
14 that's -- again, there's three or four or five or six  
15 different funders that we have, so it's a lot -- it's a lot  
16 of work for our funders -- or to do our reports.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And how long does  
18 that take?

19 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** I have -- I have  
20 employed two financial people. I have to employ two  
21 financial people to -- and they -- and they -- they're not  
22 only financial, they're HR, as well. So they're very, very  
23 busy. It takes a long time. It takes them most of their  
24 time doing the financial reports, and that's not even the  
25 audit, right?

1           **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** So how often is  
2 this reporting or audit or gathering of information taking  
3 place?

4           **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Quarterly reports.

5           **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And when you speak  
6 about the frustration and challenges in reporting, what are  
7 the consequences of those barriers that you have  
8 identified?

9           **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Well, if we -- if we're  
10 in arrears in our reports, we could be put on the high  
11 risk. We could be designated as a high-risk agency. We  
12 could potentially lose our, you know -- so that's one of  
13 the -- what the Ministry has done is they've -- they've  
14 developed -- developed, like, this risk -- risk assessment  
15 for the agencies. And so if we're in arrears in our  
16 reports regularly, we -- we can go up in that risk. If  
17 we're, you know -- if there's a -- if we're not reporting  
18 properly, we can go up on that risk. I always -- you know,  
19 we used to say that they hold us more accountable than they  
20 do hospitals, and I believe that to be true, you know. So  
21 we -- and then, of course, if -- if we're -- we're  
22 designated as a medium or high-risk agency, that goes to  
23 their board of directors, right? And so we, as an  
24 organization -- we, you know -- we're basically said that  
25 we're high risk, and that's not good for a funder -- you

1 know, for a funder to designate an agency as a medium or  
2 high risk. We always want to be a low risk. So there's  
3 definitely consequences for us not -- not doing these  
4 reports on time.

5 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Does being a high-  
6 risk agency affect whether or not you receive funding or  
7 the amount that you receive?

8 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** Well, we've never been a  
9 high-risk agency, so I don't know. But I think it -- it  
10 would definitely require a lot of Ministry intervention.  
11 So a Ministry would have to come in and -- and work with  
12 your -- you know, they'd have to make sure all  
13 their -- their checklists are -- are in place. But I -- I  
14 really do believe, you know, they've -- they do hold us  
15 more accountable than, you know, than they would a  
16 hospital. We kid around about that, but I really believe  
17 that to be true. And even when they have -- when our  
18 salaries were all -- there was a while back where the  
19 Ministry had -- I forget the word, but we couldn't go up in  
20 our salaries. Nobody could. And it wasn't because of the  
21 shelters. It was because of the high-paying salaries of,  
22 like, hospitals, and other -- other agencies, but we were  
23 all put in that same category where even though the -- we  
24 were the lowest salaried employees, we couldn't -- we  
25 weren't able to have any kind of raises because there was



1 basically a cap on all the salaries when it wasn't because  
2 of shelter workers. It was because of hospital staff,  
3 hospital workers, but we were put in that same category.  
4 So that's some of the challenges that we've dealt with in  
5 Ontario.

6 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And in addition to  
7 that barrier of a cap, I'm just wondering in terms of those  
8 challenges and frustrations, would you ever -- would  
9 funding ever be withheld from your shelter if you don't  
10 fill out a form properly?

11 **MS. SARAH MONTOUR:** I think, yes,  
12 definitely. Well, if we're not, you know -- and I -- I  
13 have a lot of compassion for, like I said, those I -- my  
14 sister INAC shelters who are solely funded by INAC or AHWS,  
15 Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, because I know  
16 they don't have the -- they don't have half these resources  
17 that we have up here. And -- or even a quarter. And  
18 their -- their -- their directors are busy on the floor,  
19 tending to clients, putting out fires, cooking supper,  
20 cleaning toilets, you know, and -- but -- and if they don't  
21 have those reports done or they don't -- those proposals  
22 done, then they won't get the funding, you know.  
23 So -- but, meanwhile, they're busy taking care of the  
24 actual people, the actual women in the shelter, the  
25 children in the shelter. And they don't have -- they don't

1 have an assistant like I do. They don't have a financial  
2 person like I do. They have to do it all. And so I just  
3 have so much compassion for them because I know that as bad  
4 as we're saying it is, you know, I just know that  
5 it's -- it's way worse for them because they don't have the  
6 support.

7 **JOSIE NEPINAK, NAKUSET, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**

8 **Affirmed:**

9 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PASTORA SALA:**

10 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you. This  
11 is for both Nakuset and Ms. Nepinak. I'd like to pick up  
12 on one of my colleagues', Ms. Beaudin's questions, relating  
13 to also reporting and give you each an opportunity to share  
14 what you would recommend for a reporting process. I  
15 believe Ms. Montour had the opportunity to recommend what  
16 she would envision, but I'd like to hear from you on that  
17 point.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Okay. Well, we report  
19 directly to the Province of Alberta, which is a little bit  
20 different from the INAC-funded agencies. And we, as well,  
21 provide quarterly reports. And it is -- that is financial  
22 reports, as well as program reports. And it -- the -- the  
23 financial reporting comes under what we call Schedule B,  
24 and that is a template that is administered by all the  
25 shelters across the province. So there's -- there is a

1 standardized form, as well as our program report form is  
2 standardized, as well, although I have issues with  
3 the -- with the report, the program report, as well as  
4 around the financial because, again, I talk about the  
5 cultural peace and having Elders as an essential service.  
6 There is no line for that.

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So that -- and then the  
9 other piece around program report is some of the questions  
10 that are asked during the exit process of women who are in  
11 the shelter. So there are namely three questions. One is  
12 how -- do you feel safer now that you've been in the  
13 shelter; are you able to provide safety for yourself and  
14 for your children. Where -- another question might be,  
15 were all of your cultural needs met.

16 Now, with that question, particularly around  
17 cultural needs, as I indicated, 65 percent of the women  
18 going into shelters in this province are Indigenous women.  
19 So most women -- and when you're in a shelter, there is  
20 that power -- power differential, right? And -- and she  
21 wants to protect herself and her children, so naturally  
22 she's going to say "yes." So the data that's actually going  
23 back to the Province of Alberta is -- is not accurate, as  
24 well, because what they come back and say, "Well, 99

1 percent of the women that you're serving through the  
2 shelters are saying yes, that their cultural needs are  
3 met." Rather, if they had asked the question around "do you  
4 have access to the medicines, the Elders, the cultural role  
5 models, to a trauma-informed counsellor, those kinds of  
6 questions would be richer in terms of capturing the -- the  
7 true experiences of -- of Indigenous women and children.  
8 So there are issues with reporting, absolutely.

9 And I've advocated for -- for many years  
10 to -- to have that -- to have that changed. And, of  
11 course, I'm one voice. In Alberta, the majority of  
12 shelters in this province are non-Indigenous. And so you  
13 get one little brown face in there, and they don't listen  
14 to us very well, you know? So our voices are drowned out  
15 pretty quickly and watered down.

16 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It's very -- it's very  
18 challenging.

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Nakuset, do you  
20 have anything to add in terms of process you would  
21 recommend?

22 **NAKUSET:** Okay. So Native Women's Shelter,  
23 the -- we get funded through PSOC just for operations, but  
24 I also have funding agreements with the Secretary des

1 affaires Autochtones, yes, DC, Employment Services, blah,  
2 blah. And so I don't know the whole acronym. Ville  
3 duMarial, the Burrow at Ville-Marie, Health Canada, INAC,  
4 and Justice Canada. So --

5 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And do they all  
6 require reporting and different --

7 **NAKUSET:** All recesses --

8 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** -- reporting?

9 **NAKUSET:** They all require reporting. They  
10 all require financial reports, plus written reports, all at  
11 different dates, different -- like, I think for Health  
12 Canada, it's, like, three times a year. Everyone else is  
13 about four times a year. We have to actually have a list  
14 on the wall to say when is this due so we can let the staff  
15 know, which reminds me that I have to find out if my -- if  
16 my Iskweu worker did her report because I've got a  
17 notification.

18 So once you hand in the report, then they  
19 look at them, and then they decide whether or not they're  
20 going to pay you their next installment. I have some, like  
21 Justice Canada, where you have to ask for money ahead of  
22 time. So they don't pay you unless you ask them to pay  
23 you. Like, why? Why don't you just -- anyway. Whatever.  
24 So we have to remind Justice Canada to, hey, can you give

1 us the next installment so we can pay our -- our worker?

2 The -- the hard thing is that sometimes you  
3 do it all, and you still don't get paid. So I have a  
4 contribution agreement with Health Canada. I signed it on  
5 April the 1st. I'm still waiting for monies. I mean, I'll  
6 get monies 'till September, but I am still giving those  
7 services, so you have to be -- you know, I'm not going to  
8 let -- I can't say to the women, sorry, we're not going to  
9 have our psychologist in because Health Canada didn't pay  
10 us. I'll find other ways to make sure that they still get  
11 the services, and sometimes I tell psychologists, listen,  
12 the money is coming soon. Can you -- can you just wait?  
13 Still give the services? And it's incredibly difficult,  
14 because let me tell you, if it was the other way around, if  
15 I do everything by the book and still don't get paid, that  
16 would be unacceptable. If they asked me to -- like, I'm --  
17 it's like I'm being penalized even though I did everything.  
18 You understand what I'm saying?

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Yeah.

20 **NAKUSET:** You're looking at me weird.

21 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** No, I'm -- I'm --  
22 I'm not meaning to look at you weird. I'm -- I guess I'm  
23 just hoping to hear from you in terms of what you would  
24 recommend for a process.

25 **NAKUSET:** With each of them?

1           **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Or just -- just  
2 generally, if you have any thoughts on -- on a recommended  
3 process.

4           **NAKUSET:** Wow. I think that they -- the  
5 funding agencies that I mentioned should be -- it should be  
6 reflective. What they expect from me, they should also  
7 expect from themselves. If I hand everything in in a timely  
8 fashion, with the written reports, the financial reports,  
9 then I should get paid for that. They should not be like,  
10 oh, well, I went on vacation, and then it was on somebody  
11 else's desk, and it wasn't processed properly, and yeah, by  
12 the end of summer you'll get it. That kind of thing.

13           They -- we are not treated equally in what  
14 they ask and then what we produce and then they sort of are  
15 like, well, you just wait. I mean, I have horror stories  
16 where it's a year that I haven't gotten paid. A year. But  
17 I still give those services, so that's why I said, we have  
18 to be, you know, super creative. And thank God that we can  
19 see a lot of community support in donations, because really,  
20 that has helped us to -- to give these essential services.

21           **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you. Ms.  
22 Montour, coming back to you, over the course of the last  
23 week and even today, we've heard a lot about culturally  
24 appropriate services. When we look at culturally  
25 appropriate services, is it conceivable that there are

1 differences between and within nations and regions?

2 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

3 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And you have  
4 identified -- or you have testified about a nationally  
5 imposed directive to access the funding, agreed?

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** A nationally imposed ...

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Well, by your  
8 funders, an imposed system to access the funding.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

10 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** One consequence of  
11 the -- this imposition of a directive on how to access the  
12 funding, is it that you are unable to provide the services  
13 that you -- or that would be culturally appropriate within  
14 your nation for the individuals you serve?

15 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I'm not sure I  
16 understand your question.

17 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Is one of the  
18 consequences of the imposed way that they -- or information  
19 that they require from you, is one of the consequences of  
20 the -- not only the ways and the process but also what  
21 they're providing you funding for, that you are unable to  
22 provide the culturally appropriate services that are  
23 culturally appropriate for your nation and the individuals  
24 you serve?

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I still don't



1 understand. I'm sorry.

2 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** If you --  
3 Counsel, if you could break it down step by step, please,  
4 sort of reframe the question?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Sorry. I can't.

6 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** That's okay. So  
7 you -- you -- you indicated that the process that has been  
8 identified to access the service is something that has been  
9 imposed upon your shelter, correct?

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** And you agreed that  
12 what is culturally appropriate may change within regions and  
13 nations.

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Correct.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** So is one of the  
16 consequences of having an imposed system for accessing the  
17 funding that you are unable to -- to do what is culturally  
18 appropriate within your nation that you -- your -- the  
19 clients you serve or the individuals you serve would define  
20 as culturally appropriate?

21 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That we're unable to do  
22 it? For all the nations, do you mean?

23 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** That you serve.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That we serve.

25 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Individuals.

1                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No. We -- we -- I think  
2 for us, we -- we -- we do our best to always go back to our  
3 basics, and where we started was in 1980s and we did in our  
4 -- our original needs assessment, and we heard from our  
5 community in the 1980s. They wanted to be serviced by our  
6 own people and they wanted services in their own way. So  
7 any kind of funding that we get, we always do that. We go  
8 back to our own -- our own culture and our own traditions  
9 and our own teachings. And I -- and I find that if we do  
10 that, we are -- we are always okay.

11                   **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Can I ask, earlier,  
12 Ms. Montour, in answering Ms. Dunn's question, you stated  
13 that the concept of shelter was imposed.

14                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, yes.

15                   **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** On --

16                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

17                   **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** I'm wondering, how  
18 would you define the shelter or -- or maybe that's not even  
19 the right word, but how would you define it from your  
20 perspective in your nation?

21                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Okay. Well, we do the  
22 best we can to -- we work with the whole family. Like,  
23 that's how we want to do family violence prevention work.  
24 It involves the children, the women, the men. We learned a  
25 long time ago, long time ago, that if we were just going to

1 work with the women and the children, the women are going  
2 nowhere without their men. So we had to include the men.  
3 As a matter of fact, our men's program started as just a  
4 pilot project way back in 1990, I believe. We've had the  
5 men's program, and back then, we used to get our hands  
6 slapped by our sister shelters all the time because we were  
7 working with men.

8 But we just stayed true to our values. We  
9 stayed true to the, you know, to our traditions of our  
10 people, that it's not -- this problem is not just about  
11 women. It is about, you know, we would hear from children.  
12 Children would sometimes say, you know what, I'm -- I'm okay  
13 with my dad, I'm afraid of my mom. We heard that. You  
14 know, we -- so we were looking and we were hearing things  
15 about sexual abuse a long time ago. We were hearing that  
16 sometimes it wasn't the men that were sexually abusing. We  
17 were hearing that sometimes it was the women, too. So we  
18 were -- we've been speaking those truths for 30 years.  
19 People have not wanted to hear it, but we've -- you know  
20 what.

21 So we -- we went back to our original  
22 teachings and we talked about that duality and we talked  
23 about that good-mindedness and that not-good-mindedness and  
24 that we are all susceptible to it, whether we're a child, a  
25 teen, an Elder, a -- a woman, a man, you know, whatever.

1 We're all susceptible to that not-so-good mind, and that we  
2 all have a responsibility. So I believe we -- we operate  
3 our shelter the way we need to at Six Nations.

4 Mind you, we don't open it up to all men. I  
5 have to be clear with that. It is just for Six Nations men  
6 and New Credit men. So it's not for all men to come to. We  
7 did that just so we can maintain some level of safety for  
8 the women, too. So it's not for -- open to every man out  
9 there, but it -- mind you, we -- we have a population of  
10 over 13,000 people, so we -- so I guarantee you right now,  
11 there's at least -- there's at least four men in our shelter  
12 right now. And also -- as well as women. So that -- that's  
13 the way we operate our -- our program. It's more of a  
14 family. They call it, like, a family shelter.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Okay.

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** That's where I hear  
17 people calling it, but we don't call it that. It's just our  
18 shelter.

19 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** All three of you  
20 have referenced the many types of services that you provide  
21 in your shelter. I'm wondering if each of you could share  
22 information on the importance that you see in providing a  
23 variety of services within one space. Maybe I'll start with  
24 you, Ms. Nepinak.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Certainly there can be

1 challenges around it. I mean, the whole concept of -- if I  
2 can just go back to that a little bit, around -- around  
3 sheltering is, from my perspective, at least, as a healing  
4 lodge. And within that healing lodge, we have the sacred  
5 space, and within this space, and that is to service the  
6 families that come into the shelter. And so as -- as a  
7 result of families coming in, there is a -- the -- the needs  
8 become identified, clearer and clearer, through our intake  
9 process. For example, mom may have -- and we have seen  
10 this, mom may have stage 4 cancer. You know, we had one  
11 incident where we had a -- a grandmother who came in with  
12 her two granddaughters, who were 14 and 16, from another  
13 province, and -- and she was very, very ill, and --  
14 ambulance had to come and get her, you know, to the  
15 hospital. And -- and so the child support workers then kick  
16 in, and work with the -- the youth. And took the kids over  
17 to the hospital to see grandma, and -- and they were there  
18 to nurture and hug the kids as, obviously, they were very  
19 upset. And then to transport them back to the lodge. And  
20 we wanted to give this grand -- the grandmother the dignity  
21 of being able to make the decisions about her  
22 granddaughters.

23 I mean, policy would tell us otherwise that  
24 when there are children in the shelter that are abandoned  
25 for whatever reason, is that we would call Child Welfare.

1 We didn't call Child Welfare. We brought in extra staff  
2 to -- to stay with -- with the youth, the girls who were 14  
3 and 16. Had we called Child Welfare, we know for certain  
4 that those girls would have ran. And they would have been  
5 on the streets, et cetera, et cetera. We know the story.  
6 But, I think, it's -- it's very important to -- to create  
7 that environment and that atmosphere that -- to the hope --  
8 hopefully, as much as we can possibility to the individual  
9 needs of that family. That -- that is critically important.  
10 Did I answer your question? Or did I --

11 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Yes.

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I did. Okay.

13 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

15 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** I -- I notice I'm  
16 over time. I'm wondering if the -- Ms. Montour and Nakuset  
17 have the opportunity to answer the question, or if -- if I  
18 should --

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do you want to?

20 **NAKUSET:** I can. So we have a lot of  
21 different, I guess, specialized staff because every time we  
22 see an issue, we want to make sure that we have a -- a  
23 qualified person to address that issue. So, you know, we  
24 make sure that when we hire addictions workers that they  
25 actually have a background working in -- in addictions. We

1 try to match the -- the service with the most appropriate  
2 person because we have to help the people that come through  
3 our doors, who we choose to help. And -- and every year the  
4 -- the issues are changing. And we -- we keep growing  
5 because nobody else is doing it. So we step up to the  
6 plate.

7 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you.

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We just -- we have a --  
9 a variety of services in a -- in a space. And I think  
10 what's important is that we all know our role and  
11 responsibility.

12 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** M'hm.

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** It's a really big,  
14 really big -- those two words mean a lot for any  
15 Hodinohso:ni community, to know our roles and  
16 responsibilities. And I find that we're really good at --  
17 we get things done. If we -- as long as we know what our  
18 role is and our responsibility, we're -- we're -- we got  
19 back to being very, like, living in the longhouse. We --  
20 everybody knows what they're supposed to do and what their  
21 role is, and it gets done.

22 **MS. JOELLE PASTORA SALA:** Thank you, all.  
23 Thank you.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms.  
25 Pastora Sala. The Commissioners would like to invite up the

1 next counsel, Ms. Elizabeth Zarpa, on behalf of ITK. Ms.  
2 Zarpa will have 19 minutes, please.

3 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Hi. Good afternoon.  
4 My name is Elizabeth Zarpa. I'm counsel with the Inuit  
5 Tapiriit Kanatami. I want to say thank you to the Blackfoot  
6 Nation and the Métis of Treaty 7 for allowing me to be here  
7 on their land.

8 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

9 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:**

10 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** So I wanted to delve  
11 into this, and also thank you, everybody, for your time, and  
12 your expertise, and your wisdom, and lived experience. And  
13 I'm -- I'm going to gear my question predominately towards  
14 Nakuset. So I'm -- I know before, you mentioned, this is a  
15 touchy subject with regards to the experience of, sort of,  
16 Inuit women having their children taken away and, "It kills  
17 them."

18 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

19 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Did you -- in that  
20 experience, in what you've seen from, say, an Inuk coming  
21 down to Montreal, and her child is taken away, what is the  
22 process from start to finish, in terms of if you wanted to  
23 emphasize the main points that she has to endure.

24 **NAKUSET:** Sorry. Say that again? When an --  
25 when and Inuk woman comes to the city, now is she pregnant



1 before or -- already? It -- it gets really complicated  
2 because sometimes they come to the city and then they become  
3 pregnant, and it may not be a healthy relationship. And  
4 then they have to figure out what their going to do. So,  
5 unfortunately, what happens a lot, is they give birth to the  
6 baby and then they leave the hospital. And these babies go  
7 into Youth Protection right away. So I know -- is that  
8 helpful? Or you don't want to hear that?

9 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** From that point --

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

11 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- when they -- they go  
12 into Youth Protection --

13 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

14 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** -- say -- say, the  
15 mother wants support in that process. Does she have access  
16 to civil law, common law, any type of support that's  
17 understanding of where she comes from and the experiences  
18 she's enduring?

19 **NAKUSET:** You -- you're making it a very  
20 individual case. And it's hard for me to say exactly  
21 because first, she has to want to fight to have that child  
22 back and then she has to access the services. So if she's  
23 at the Native Women's Shelter, and we know that she's  
24 pregnant, and we know the social worker is going to try to  
25 take that baby, then we can begin the process where our

1 family care worker starts talking with the social worker,  
2 they're creating a plan, they're following through on the  
3 plan, and then she gets to keep the child at the shelter  
4 with the mom. And then we have outreach services so  
5 that -- that she can, you know, find an apartment and -- and  
6 be supported for as long as she wants to be supported.

7 So -- but if she doesn't come to the shelter,  
8 then, you know, a lot of these kids go to -- to families.  
9 And I know one particular Mohawk woman, named Barbara  
10 McDonald (ph) from Kanasatake, and she has received all  
11 kinds of children, it's unbelievable how this woman can take  
12 on so many. But she just does it with such love. You know,  
13 I remember she would come to a meeting and she'd have three,  
14 like, infants with her. And she'd be, like, you know, "It's  
15 an honour to work with these babies." You know, she's  
16 doesn't know how long she's going to keep them. You know,  
17 maybe the mother is going to try to -- to, you know, have a  
18 relationship, and -- and fight the system. But she is all  
19 for that. I mean, she wants to support these babies, she  
20 wants to support the mothers. And that's awesome that, you  
21 know, some of our people are trying to help, but we're, sort  
22 of, the minority in that. I -- I don't know if I -- do you  
23 have another question? I  
24 don't -- I'm not sure if I'm answering it.

25 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** So I wanted to, sort

1 of, get into the experience of -- thank you for providing  
2 that information, in your seeing these things occurs within  
3 the shelter. Is it a common occurrence that Inuit women  
4 usually don't get their children back?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

6 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Or do they get them  
7 back?

8 **NAKUSET:** It is not the norm to get your  
9 children back. I was just at Youth Protection. I was  
10 explaining that. They make it so hard for us to get our  
11 kids back. They -- we have to jump through hoops, and then  
12 more hoops, and then more hoops. And I'm, you know, working  
13 again with Youth Protection and I'm going to be creating,  
14 like, a new program that they're doing for the Black  
15 community. And I was saying, "Why aren't you doing this for  
16 the Indigenous community? There are more kids in care and,  
17 you know, you said you're going to follow the TRCs. Why  
18 aren't you doing this?" I have to, like -- I have to almost  
19 bully people into actually doing the work. But I'll do it.

20 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** All right. And would  
21 you support the idea of a recommendation that the Province  
22 of Quebec create an inquiry into Inuit children being  
23 apprehended by Child Protection?

24 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely.

25 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Thank you. I

1 wanted to go, also, into the experience of different reason  
2 around why Inuit go to, say, Montreal. You highlighted that  
3 they travel there from Nunavut, but I would assume that it's  
4 predominately from Nunavik?

5 **NAKUSET:** It could be. I'm -- I'm not  
6 exactly --

7 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. And are some of  
8 the reasons to go down for, like, to go to university, or to  
9 go to college? You mentioned earlier, "To live the dream,  
10 where things are not as expensive."

11 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

12 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And they go to  
13 hospitals, mental health --

14 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

15 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And do you think that  
16 there would be the same level of Inuit in homeless shelters  
17 in Montreal, if there was equitable access to their own  
18 hospitals in their own territories, their own mental health  
19 centres, their own educational institutions, within their  
20 own homes?

21 **NAKUSET:** If they had in their own  
22 communities, they wouldn't come down.

23 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Great.

24 **NAKUSET:** They love their communities, and  
25 they're proud of them, and, yeah.

1                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. And -- and this  
2 was a part of the -- the exhibit, I think it was Exhibit 38,  
3 on housing needs and preferences of Indigenous people using  
4 community resources in Montreal, page 1.

5                   **NAKUSET:** Page 1. Do I have that? Sorry.

6                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Are you okay?

7                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

8                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. So it outlines  
9 that Indigenous people, particularly Inuit, are  
10 overrepresented among homeless people in Montreal, and on  
11 March 24th, 2015, about 10 percent of the 3,016 homeless  
12 persons who were surveyed were Indigenous, while they  
13 represent only .6 percent of Montreal's overall population.  
14 Of this 10 percent, about 40 percent were Inuit, while Inuit  
15 represent only 10 percent of the Indigenous population in  
16 Montreal.

17                   Now, I wanted to understand whether in this  
18 experience of having a high number of Inuit coming to  
19 Montreal, and this level of homelessness, if there's any  
20 consultation or any type of agreement with, like, the  
21 Nunavik Government or the Nunavut Government to somehow  
22 bridge the gaps?

23                   **NAKUSET:** I would not know the  
24 question -- or the answer to that.

25                   I just wanted to mention something that I

1 haven't yet. In Quebec, when they're MedEvac'd, when the  
2 children are taken from the community to come to Montreal,  
3 the government doesn't think it's important to include the  
4 parent, so the children come by themselves. And a lot of  
5 them are super young and don't even speak English, and they  
6 show up at the hospital and they're crying for their  
7 mothers.

8 And this happens, it's been going on for 10,  
9 15 years, the Gazette wrote an article about it, the  
10 government said, yeah, we should probably do something  
11 about it. They haven't done anything about it. So I'm  
12 thinking, okay, that's going to be the next thing I do.

13 There's just so many -- and, you know,  
14 separating the mother and the child, or the family and  
15 child, it's been happening forever and it continues, so I  
16 just wanted to throw that out there, I just wanted to put  
17 that on the record.

18 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And are these  
19 children, when they come down, are they put into the  
20 Nunavik house, or do they stay in the hospital?

21 **NAKUSET:** No, this is like a regular  
22 hospital. It's like the children's hospital. And, like,  
23 the doctors can't communicate with the children, you know,  
24 they have to bring in an interpreter, and they're saying,  
25 what is she crying about? She's saying she wants her mom.

1                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. Thank you for  
2 highlighting those things, I appreciate that. And so if  
3 there's an individual who comes from Nunavik and they're  
4 homeless and they decide, okay, this is the point in my  
5 life I want to go back to my territory, are there -- flying  
6 from Montreal to, say, Kuujjuak or Aupaluk or Iqaluit,  
7 those flights are in the thousands of dollars.

8                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm, m'hm.

9                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Are there programs  
10 available for individuals, whether it's by the regional  
11 government systems or the province that you're aware of,  
12 where if they want to go home and they're homeless, that's  
13 available?

14                   **NAKUSET:** The Open Door, which is a day  
15 shelter in Montreal, is working with Makivik, and they are  
16 able to negotiate flights through Air Inuit to bring them  
17 back to their community. But I know that even that has  
18 been difficult if they don't have their identification  
19 because they're homeless, and they can't get on that plane.

20                   It's -- you know, I know the staff there,  
21 they go over and above to try to -- to get those documents  
22 to support the people that want to go back to the  
23 community, to actually drive them to the airport. Like,  
24 there are people that are -- that are doing some of that  
25 work.

1                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Great. And are you  
2 familiar, or do you know of any sort of Inuit shelters  
3 specific in Nunavik or Nunavut for individuals, say, who  
4 are homeless, they take a flight back, if that's available  
5 to them? If they wanted to go to into a healing lodge in  
6 their own home?

7                   **NAKUSET:** I know that -- I believe there are  
8 two Inuit shelters. I know Quebec Native Women, they have  
9 all the connections between all the shelters in Quebec. I  
10 can't tell you the names of them offhand. I know that  
11 there are Inuit addiction centres that we refer our clients  
12 to, and we help with flying them there or finding the  
13 transportation.

14                   But in Montreal there's no Inuit specific  
15 shelter. We -- like I said, PAK has Inuit clientele, the  
16 Native Women's Shelter does, and sometimes they go to other  
17 non-Indigenous shelters.

18                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And would you agree  
19 that Montreal needs a specific Inuit women's shelter?

20                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah, for men and for women, so we  
21 should have two.

22                   **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay, thank you. And  
23 within these shelters that Inuit women in Montreal do have  
24 access to, do they have things like country food, like quaq  
25 or muktuk or char, seals, anything like that?



1           **NAKUSET:** At the Native Women's Shelter we  
2 get country food, and I think the Open Door also gets  
3 country food. I think the Native Friendship Centre does.  
4 I think all the shelters do. They -- yeah, they know who  
5 the person is to bring the country food down, or sometimes  
6 if you have the staff then they have the connection.

7           Plus, you know, we also -- a lot of the  
8 organizations are also working with the clientele to  
9 develop their art with the soapstone sculptures. There's a  
10 lot more projects going on right now for that.

11           **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay, thank you. So  
12 this question is going to be to all three of you, and would  
13 you agree, Ms. Nepinak, Ms. Montour and Ms. -- or Nakuset,  
14 that individuals and children who come into shelters, safe  
15 houses and transition houses, are some of the most  
16 vulnerable people in Canadian society?

17           **NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**  
18           **Affirmed:**

19           **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. ZARPA:**

20           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

21           **NAKUSET:** Yes.

22           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would say so,  
23 absolutely.

24           **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And would you agree,  
25 all three of you again, that each shelter is common in some

1 of their struggles, but they are also diverse in their  
2 struggles based on their geographic location, as was  
3 emphasized on reserve, off reserve, main stream?

4 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

5 NAKUSET: Yes.

6 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

7 MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And between all three  
8 of you there is no representation of an Inuit shelter from  
9 Inuit Nunangat, so Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik or  
10 Nunatsiavut on this panel?

11 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's true.

12 MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: And within that, do  
13 you -- from what you've testified earlier, Ms. Montour, you  
14 mentioned that the northern experience is very different?

15 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Yes.

16 MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Did you want to  
17 highlight what you mean by north?

18 MS. SANDRA MONTOUR: Well, where I'm  
19 thinking of north is just who is in our membership, and so  
20 I'm thinking of Fort Albany -- the remote communities,  
21 fly-in communities, like Fort Albany, Big Trout, even past  
22 Kenora in the Treaty 3 area, that's who I think of in the  
23 north. But I'm just thinking of our membership as far as  
24 ASO, but in terms of -- I definitely support the idea of

1 definitely there needs to be an Inuit shelter, specific  
2 shelter. I've always wondered why there wasn't.

3 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** And in your idea of,  
4 like, north within your membership area, what  
5 were -- what's missing from hearing their particular  
6 stories or their experience could be very different from  
7 your geographic location because of where -- it's in the  
8 north?

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely, yes.

10 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** Okay. At this point I  
11 want to put in a formal protest that there's no  
12 representation of Inuit shelters from Inuit Nunangat, and  
13 in that there's a huge gap in the information that's being  
14 shared here today, and the Inuit specific experience of  
15 women and children and vulnerable people living far north.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's been noted.

17 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** It's duly  
18 noted, thank you.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's duly noted,  
20 thank you.

21 **MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA:** That's all I have  
22 today. Thank you.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you,  
24 Ms. Zarpa.

1 Commission Counsel would now like to invite  
2 Ms. Julie McGregor on behalf of the Assembly of First  
3 Nations to do her cross-examination. Ms. McGregor has 23  
4 and a half minutes.

5 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Good afternoon,  
6 Commissioners and panel members. My name is Julie McGregor  
7 and --

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you just wait a  
9 moment, Julie, sorry. We're just trying to set the time  
10 for you.

11 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Okay.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. Thank you  
13 for your patience. I think Mr. Registrar had to step out  
14 for a minute.

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** That's okay.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I would say go  
17 ahead. You have extra seconds.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** My name is Julie  
19 McGregor and I'm Algonquin from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg,  
20 and I represent the Assembly of First Nations here today.

21 I'd like to thank Manitoba Keewatinowi  
22 Okimakanak for sharing their time with the AFN today, and  
23 I'd also like to thank all the panel members for all of the  
24 great work they do. Ms. Nepinak, you mentioned the war on  
25 Indigenous women, and I have to say, after listening to all

1 of your evidence today, I am so glad and so proud to have  
2 warriors like yourselves on the frontlines of that war.

3 In terms of my questioning today, I want to  
4 begin by directing my questions to Nakuset, Ms. Nepinak,  
5 and then Ms. Montour.

6 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

7 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Nakuset, you said -- you  
9 spoke about your frustration, and -- and it really came  
10 through in your evidence, about always having to educate  
11 institutions like the police, and you provided an example of  
12 McGill University, on the circumstances of Indigenous people  
13 and that the onus is always on Indigenous people to -- to  
14 educate the public. Based on your interactions with these  
15 institutions, why do you think there is a lack of knowledge  
16 out there about these things? Is it just plain ignorance?  
17 Is it resistance to change? Is it because there's a public  
18 perception that these issues are not important? Or is it  
19 just plain racism?

20 **NAKUSET:** Yes, yes, yes, yes.

21 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Good.

22 **(LAUGHTER)**

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think in -- do  
24 you think that the government institution that you had  
25 interactions with perpetuate negative stereotypes about

1 Indigenous people and that those stereotypes result in a  
2 lack of public support for resolving these longstanding  
3 issues?

4 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

5 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** One of the  
6 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation  
7 Commission, and I'm not going to get into the -- the TRC  
8 report or anything, was that the history of residential  
9 schools should be taught in schools so that there is public  
10 education. In a similar way, what are some of the more  
11 concrete and practical ways to educate public service  
12 providers and governments, specifically about -- about  
13 providing services to Indigenous people?

14 **NAKUSET:** In my area?

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

16 **NAKUSET:** You mean in Quebec?

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Yes, in Quebec.

18 **NAKUSET:** There's so much. You know, like I  
19 said, you know, Quebec has 11 nations and most service  
20 providers don't even know -- if they get three of them  
21 right, that's amazing. So there's so much that they need to  
22 be educated on, but that's, you know, cultural norms. I  
23 mean, if we were to put out, like, stereotypes of Indigenous  
24 people and just hand that around and -- and see if they're  
25 like, oh, that's a stereotype, you mean it's not true?

1       There are so many misguided -- sometimes I don't even think  
2       that they're -- they mean to be cruel. They -- they  
3       -- they just don't know any better. So I -- like I said, I  
4       -- I'm good with educating as much as I -- as I can, but I  
5       think there's also responsibility for people to educate  
6       themselves, and that seems to be a real effort for them to  
7       do.

8                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So it should be the  
9       government and the service providers educating themselves.

10                   **NAKUSET:** I think everyone should be. But  
11       you know, I mean, the TRCs, that was why they was created,  
12       the, you know, the 94 recommendations were supposed to be  
13       for institutions. So I think that when you start a job and  
14       it's your first day and you're filling out the paperwork,  
15       all of a sudden, the TRCs will be there. Can you read them?  
16       You've read them? Can you sign the paper at the end because  
17       you know them? Okay. Feel free to apply them as well. I  
18       think that's what the whole purpose is. But who is going to  
19       force these institutions to do that? I thought that's what  
20       the whole purpose was, but no one's forcing them. So I  
21       guess that's another thing on a wish list, of having the TRC  
22       enforcers.

23                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So would it be the TRC  
24       or what -- it could be, you know, the governments  
25       themselves? Like, how do they provide funding to service

1 providers? Shouldn't that be part of their -- their  
2 agreements, their funding agreements? They somehow enforce  
3 this level of public education?

4 **NAKUSET:** So you're saying that governments  
5 should have funding so that they teach themselves about  
6 First -- Indigenous issues?

7 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** No, I'm saying that when  
8 you say, like, you have a -- say you have a child welfare  
9 agency or you have the police services --

10 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

11 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- they receive money as  
12 well, and that --

13 **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you know, but maybe  
15 that funding should be conditional upon them showing that  
16 they're doing that.

17 **NAKUSET:** Yes. I like that.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** All right. I was going  
19 to ask you about which -- all of the levels that you talked  
20 about. You should -- you said there should be training at  
21 all levels and I wanted --

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- you to kind of  
24 enumerate them, but I think you just mean at all levels  
25 anywhere, right?



1                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

2                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** In terms of the  
3 training?

4                   **NAKUSET:** Yeah. Everywhere.

5                   **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

6                   **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

7                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** That's great. Thank  
8 you. Josie?

9                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes?

10                  **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And can I call you  
11 Josie?

12                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

13                  **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Actually, can I call the  
14 panel all of -- by your first names, if that's okay? Thank  
15 you. In your evidence, I recall that you spoke about  
16 *Minobimaatisiiwin*, and -- and you said it's the good life.

17                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

18                  **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Can you explain a little  
19 bit for the panel what that entails?

20                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, *Minobimaatisiiwin*  
21 is living a good life. And -- and within that good life,  
22 you have your fundamental -- your beliefs, your actions, how  
23 you interact with other people, what your home fires are  
24 like, how you look after the people around you, extending  
25 kindness, empathy, acceptance. And *Minobimaatisiiwin* means

1 all of those things in a very broad context. And so it's  
2 important, and it's -- it's -- it -- it's incumbent on us as  
3 individuals, I think, to -- to -- to live that good life by  
4 reflecting often on those teachings and -- and -- and the  
5 role modeling that we received in our lives. And I think  
6 about the -- the grandmothers, I think about the great-  
7 grandmothers and the many grandmothers that were in the  
8 communities that -- that demonstrated and role modelled  
9 *Minobimaatisiwin* in my community and how I would like to  
10 emulate that behaviour today to -- to be -- to live that  
11 good life. That's what I believe it is.

12 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So *Minobimaatisiwin* is  
13 a holistic principle in your --

14 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

15 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- your belief. Yes.  
16 So in the spirit of that, would you agree that funding for  
17 shelters needs to be sufficient to include holistic  
18 programming for the individuals, which includes -- which  
19 would -- could include childcare, support for Elders,  
20 cultural programming, life skills, nutrition, everything  
21 that would affect that individual who's coming into the  
22 shelter?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

24 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** You mentioned also in  
25 your evidence how important it is to have staff who know the

1 ways of our people.

2 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

3 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And that really struck  
4 me, because I think it's an important point, because  
5 Indigenous people really do have a unique way of relating to  
6 each other. It's not always obvious to people who don't  
7 interact with us or don't have that experience. And so  
8 would you agree that there's a significant need to have  
9 Indigenous people providing the culturally appropriate  
10 services to Indigenous people?

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely. And I  
12 do believe that that is the only way to -- to move towards  
13 healing and wellness, is to have people with the lived  
14 experiences coupled with the educational experiences and --  
15 and the ways of -- the traditional ways as well.

16 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And we -- we heard, and  
17 I -- and I appreciate I'm not going to try to get you to  
18 talk about other panels or whatever that happened during the  
19 hearing, but we did hear a lot about requirements for  
20 recruitments, training, and educational requirements as  
21 being obstacles for Indigenous people to, you know, to  
22 receive the credentials to do the kind of work that is  
23 needed. Do you think that governments and service providers  
24 are -- should partner with First Nations and Indigenous  
25 communities to train staff and to perhaps look at

1 alternative measures for -- for credentials for people who  
2 want to work in this area, Indigenous people who want to  
3 work in this area?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, and I think  
5 that should have happened decades ago. Not today, but  
6 decades ago. I -- I -- I think it's very, very critical  
7 that we have a curriculum developed by Indigenous folks to  
8 -- to develop a training manual, to develop -- whether it's  
9 a university curriculum or a high school curriculum to  
10 prepare people for the work that is ahead. But also, with -  
11 - in conjunction with our Elders as well, with -- with  
12 ceremony, to prepare the people for it. Because there's --  
13 there -- there needs to be a lot of strength in the work  
14 that we're doing. It is very vicarious work, and quite  
15 often, we see very high-risk situations, and so we need to  
16 be prepared on many different levels to react to those  
17 situations when they come upon us.

18 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And in -- and when you  
19 have the circumstances where you hire somebody who may have  
20 the education, may have the training, may have the  
21 credentials, but doesn't quite understand how Indigenous  
22 people relate to each other, you know, but then you have, on  
23 the other side, you have a person who is, you know, very  
24 familiar with all of the issues, but perhaps doesn't have  
25 the credentials to provide the services that you need in

1 your -- in the shelters. Do you think that, you know, that  
2 those specific circumstances that where you weigh education  
3 verses life experience almost, I guess you'd say, do you  
4 need -- does that need to be adjust for the circumstances  
5 for Indigenous people?

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I think, what  
7 we do at Awo Taan, is we coupled the -- you know, you have  
8 some that are very, very culturally, very, very strong, and  
9 some who are -- may not be as strong but have excellent  
10 advocacy skills, so we try to pair people together, and I  
11 know we -- there was mention that quite often people have to  
12 work alone, but we're quite lucky we don't -- that doesn't  
13 happen for our organization. There's also a requirement by  
14 our funders, at least for the provincial funders, that when  
15 we apply for dollars we have to send our job descriptions  
16 with our minimum requirements to -- for -- for each of our  
17 positions, and they'll sometimes ask for resumes, they'll  
18 ask for criminal security clearance checks, as well as our  
19 child welfare cheques every three years as well.

20 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm. Do you think that  
21 governments need to invest, either provincially or  
22 Federally, do they need to invest in building more capacity  
23 within First Nations in terms of providing training and  
24 education for Indigenous people to work within their  
25 communities? Or in urban areas, as well?

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, and I -- that  
2 should have happened, again, decades ago.

3                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** So I just want to move  
4 quickly to, you provided in your evidence you discussed the  
5 Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness, which you --  
6 you wrote.

7                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

8                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** If you had the resources,  
9 and a lot of this comes down to resources we've heard that  
10 through your evidence today. You need more money.

11                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** If you had the resources  
13 to update the framework and to expand it, what would you  
14 like to see done?

15                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, I'd certainly like to  
16 -- it is a 10-year document, and as it -- it needs  
17 revisions. We need more recent practices. We need -- we  
18 need to find out what people are doing across the country to  
19 put that in our manual, as well as we need current research  
20 as to what -- what some of the trends are. We some of our  
21 data, but we also need to go back to some of our Elders to  
22 talk about some of those definitions around  
23 -- you know, I talked about the definition of healing  
24 yesterday. I talked about Indigenous ways of knowing. I  
25 talked about what best practice is in communities. I talked

1 about colonization. It's time we -- we take that -- that  
2 -- those words and -- and build them to be part of the  
3 mainstream discourse as well or discussion.

4 So we need mainstream shelters to begin to  
5 use our language around healing, around ways of knowing  
6 Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, so that Indigenous women are  
7 better served in -- in shelters.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that that  
9 probably like a practical recommendation right there? Is  
10 where you take a document, like the framework, and build it  
11 into, you know, non-Indigenous service providers --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** -- manuals, guides,  
14 books.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It is -- it is available  
16 to non-Indigenous service providers, and I actually took it,  
17 when we did the manual, to a provincial network. And again,  
18 there is the -- sometimes the lack of belief in Indigenous  
19 ways. As -- as I mentioned earlier, I sometimes, you know,  
20 I'm the only Indigenous shelter, where there may be, you  
21 know, 30 other non-Indigenous shelters, and my voice gets  
22 drowned out very quickly.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so people don't  
25 listen or pay attention or they're just not interested. I

1 -- I have to say that a few years ago that the province was  
2 doing a database, and I had to fight vigorously to have  
3 Indigenous women included in -- in the count, and some of  
4 the comments, you know, from other mainstream shelter  
5 directors were, Well, why should we count Indigenous women?  
6 They don't get nothing anyway, kind of thing. And -- and in  
7 another comment that I got is, Why aren't Indigenous women  
8 -- what is wrong with Indigenous women that they can't fit  
9 into regular programming? And -- and I'm trying to  
10 articulate, here's why, you know, there is a history, there  
11 is colonization, there's materialistic policy, there's  
12 racism. All of those things that I bring up, but people  
13 haven't had that will to -- to do it or that thinking to do  
14 it, and so many mainstream shelters continue to struggle on  
15 how to work with Indigenous women.

16 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** And do you think that  
17 perhaps Indigenous women when they go to a mainstream  
18 shelter, because of that perception, are somehow turned away  
19 from them and told, Oh, you have to go to the Indigenous  
20 shelter or some other service that's provided.

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. Yes, and I do  
22 recall, you know, one Indigenous woman being told to leave  
23 another shelter here in Calgary, and she was told to leave  
24 with her "dope", which was actually her sacred smudge that  
25 was trying to use, so they kicked her out. And another



1 woman was put out in the rain, you know, with her -- with  
2 her stroller and her baby. I can't remember what the  
3 situation was, but there are stories that -- that put  
4 Indigenous women into very dangerous situations, and we need  
5 to pay attention to those stories because this is the day-  
6 to-day reality. These are the boots on the ground that are  
7 telling us here is the situation for us today.

8 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Are there any resources  
9 for the Commissioners to draw upon when you -- you're  
10 talking about these stories, and you're saying, you know,  
11 people need to hear this, and I think the Commissioners  
12 probably need to hear these stories as well.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

14 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** What resources could  
15 they draw on for that?

16 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, certainly increased  
17 resources for Indigenous women's shelters. I think specific  
18 shelters that service women from an Indigenous lens, from an  
19 Indigenous framework, and to develop -- further develop the  
20 concepts of healing lodges because there is a certain amount  
21 of stigma when it comes to shelters as well. Who wants to  
22 go into a shelter? Well, she's a battered, you know, she  
23 wants to go in there. And there's a lot of labelling that  
24 goes on.

25 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** You know, and there's --  
2 I talked a little bit about assessments yesterday, about,  
3 you know, he's the batterer, she's the battered women. And  
4 so that whole language needs to change as well.

5                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Thank you.

6                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It needs a whole new  
7 reset is really what I'm saying. We need to build it, you  
8 know, let's break it down and let's build it from the ground  
9 up, and let's bring in our Elders, our traditional knowledge  
10 keepers, our wisdom keepers, our people with a lived  
11 experience, and -- and let's bring in our academics and our  
12 researchers. but together I believe we -- we can build  
13 lodges that are welcoming, and that do promote healing and  
14 wellness in a very positive way.

15                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Thank you.

16                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** *Miigwetch.*

17                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** *Miigwetch.*

18 **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

19 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. MCGREGOR:**

20                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Sandra, I just have a  
21 couple of questions about -- you raised in your evidence the  
22 challenges of operating a shelter on reserve, and I'd like  
23 to explore some of that. But I also -- I don't want to go  
24 over -- my friend from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs went  
25 over the funding issues, and -- and I know you -- you spoke

1 quite passionately about that, and I think that you were  
2 talking about, you know, the life of a contribution  
3 agreement. Basically, you -- you've provide a proposal, you  
4 wait a long time to get an answer, you wait long time to get  
5 a funding agreement, and then by the time you are getting  
6 the money you've already had to have done half the things  
7 you did in your proposal. And then, you know, there's a --  
8 there's a chance that you don't get the time to do  
9 everything you have in your proposal, and there's a  
10 possibility for a clawback of those funds, right? Have you  
11 ever experience that, where you've had to give back money to  
12 the government?

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We really try not to do  
14 that, but that has happened. That's like -- that hurts with  
15 everything I -- you know, to have to give that money back,  
16 but we have had to -- I'm thinking of one time, we did have  
17 to give money back because by the time we were approved for  
18 funding for our parking lot it was bad weather, and so we  
19 couldn't. And of course, April 1, March 31st is when  
20 everything has to be done. By the time we had -- were  
21 approved for it, it already started snowing for our parking  
22 lot -- to redo our parking lot, and because it snowed all  
23 the winter and right to -- into, you know, end of March, we  
24 weren't able to do the parking lot, so we had to send that  
25 money back.

1           That was probably one of the few times we  
2           have had to send money back, but we -- we're really  
3           creative. I think we, you know, we've become very good as  
4           -- at working with a system in doing the best we can to not  
5           have to send money back but to make sure those objectives  
6           get fulfilled. You know, we've -- we have to be. We have  
7           to -- otherwise I'd be sending money back all the time, so,  
8           you know, we have to be very creative in how we do it, and  
9           so that they're happy with -- they get their needs met, and  
10          we also get the work done too.

11                   **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Do you think that --  
12          different models say multi-year funding agreements, would  
13          help out in those circumstances?

14                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely. That would  
15          be great. Like I said, I spend -- the majority of my time,  
16          I spend looking for money. And I know that last year  
17          because of our government and, you know, with the -- with  
18          the prime minister wanting new things for -- for Indigenous  
19          people, there were a lot of opportunities for -- for, you  
20          know, a lot of proposals for Indigenous people, so I was  
21          very fortunate last year. But now, you know, I had a staff  
22          that was just completely burned out saying, "Sandy, no more  
23          proposals, no more, because it" -- you know, but they're  
24          also just short term, right.

25                   They're short term and now it's the reports,

1 so we're all stressed out writing all those reports and,  
2 again, it's just short-term project money that's going to  
3 be clawed back after it's done.

4 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** I'm going to throw this  
5 out to all three of you, and you -- you're welcome to  
6 answer, any of you, if you -- if you feel compelled to do  
7 so, but what's easier to navigate, the provincial funding  
8 system or the federal one?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I've had  
10 experiences with both, and I find that the provincial is  
11 much easier, and here is the reason why. Because at one  
12 time I applied for funding through INAC, through  
13 their -- through the Urban Aboriginal Initiatives, and I  
14 waited ten months to get paid for a program that had been  
15 running. We still have to pay bills for that program,  
16 right.

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** M'hm.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So ten months later, we  
19 finally get the money. But in the meantime, they still  
20 need your quarterly reports. And they -- and they're very  
21 good at reminding you, you have to bring in your quarterly  
22 reports, even though they haven't given you any money.

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Yeah. Thank you.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** For us, it would  
25 be -- for me it's the federal was much easier than the

1 province. We have a really good relationship with the  
2 federal system, our federal program supervisor, and it's  
3 more of a -- she will even text me if she needs stuff. So  
4 it's more face to face. It's a relationship, I believe,  
5 that we have with our federal system. Whereas -- and it's  
6 a lot easier and I find her to be very understanding when  
7 there's tragedy and when there's loss, and she knows  
8 reports are going to be late, and she will say just get it  
9 done whenever you can. So I find that the provincial  
10 system to be much more complicated than the federal system.

11 **NAKUSET:** I find them both difficult. What  
12 I like is the private, like the McConnell Foundation.  
13 Yeah, I think going with private foundations reporting is  
14 easier. If you have a surplus, they will meet with you and  
15 they will be, like, "Okay, so how do you want to spend the  
16 rest of this money?" It's awesome.

17 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** Well, I'm just about  
18 out of time. I kind of wanted to go further and discuss  
19 child welfare and some of the risks that mothers,  
20 Indigenous mothers, have when they --

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry, I don't  
22 think you will have time to --

23 **MS. JULIE MCGREGOR:** No, I know, I'm just  
24 finishing up. And I wanted to explore that, so perhaps  
25 maybe one of my colleagues might -- might get into that.

1           But for now I just want to say (speaking in  
2 Native language), Sandra. Well, no, actually I'm going to  
3 do this right, (speaking in Native language), Josie;  
4 (speaking in native language), Nakuset; *wela'lin*, Sandra.  
5 Thank you.

6           **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. So the  
7 Commission counsel would like to invite Families for  
8 Justice, represented by counsel Susan Fraser, to come up  
9 next for cross-examination. Ms. Fraser has 23 and a half  
10 minutes.

11           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Good afternoon,  
12 Commissioners, Elders, panel members. Members from the  
13 territory, thank you for having us and I'm grateful to them  
14 for receiving us and I'm grateful for my Indigenous friends  
15 in the Indigenous bar who have been here with me and who  
16 have been guiding me and teaching me.

17           So I'm here today on behalf of 20 families  
18 from different parts of Canada, including Stacey Duchaine  
19 who is with me today, who is -- Stacey Duchaine Anton (ph)  
20 who is originally Hodinohso:ni from Six Nations, but who is  
21 happy to be residing in Blackfoot territory and enjoying  
22 the friendship and support of the people here.

23           We have other people, and part of our group,  
24 the family, the Tashina General who is from Six Nations who  
25 unfortunately was murdered. Linda John, who -- Helena

1 Rivera who was killed as a result of family violence in  
2 Buffalo, New York. So I come here with the greetings of  
3 the families who have been watching.

4 And, Ms. Nepinak, I can tell you that it was  
5 hashtag Josie rocks yesterday as they watched online, so --

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

7 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

8 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:**

9 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So I want to start then,  
10 Ms. Nepinak, with you, with what is Exhibit 46 to these  
11 proceedings, I think page 20, which are the recommendations  
12 from the Round Table from February 2015. And  
13 I'm -- so -- I don't know if you have that document with  
14 you?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I do.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I just wanted to  
17 kind of do a little check and see what of those  
18 recommendations are presently outstanding?

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Very likely all of them.

20 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. Well, it  
21 looked --

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It requires money and  
23 resources.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So recommendation

25 1: (As Read)



1 To continue to support and follow-up  
2 with families of missing and murdered  
3 Indigenous women in Calgary and  
4 surrounding area.

5 Do you feel that there is sufficient funding  
6 to do that at present?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No, there is not.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 2:  
9 (As Read)

10 Create advocacy and healing environments  
11 for families of missing and murdered  
12 Indigenous women.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Scarcely. We have done  
14 a couple, but, again, resources are nil.

15 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Recommendation 3:  
16 (As Read)

17 Create a sacred place for people to  
18 gather, reconcile and begin the healing  
19 process.

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And when this  
22 recommendation was drafted, did you have an idea of what  
23 that looked like.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, we did. We -- we  
25 thought about a gathering place, whether it was a room,

1       whether it was a monument by the bridge, whether it was an  
2       honour wall somewhere in a location that people can visit.  
3       So those were some of the things we thought about.

4                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** A place, and I'm  
5       imagining, considering everything we've heard about, how  
6       tenuous it is as an Indigenous person to occupy space?

7                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

8                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. A place where you  
9       can go where you're not threatened, where you have a right  
10      to be, where you're not going to be hassled, where --

11                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

12                  **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- you will be welcomed?

13                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right, and that  
14      we can leave a monument that is not open to graffiti or  
15      even, you know, destruction, to be -- to have a space that  
16      is respected.

17                  **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And what's -- what is the  
18      holdup, just in terms of --

19                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We don't have the money  
20      or the resources. We have dreams, we have hopes, we -- and  
21      we'd like to see this place happen, this healing. I mean,  
22      for many of us who have missing and murdered, and the ones  
23      that have never been found, where do you go for that? To  
24      go place a rose, a flower, to take a meal to that spirit, a  
25      cup of coffee and you just sit quietly and meditate and

1 talk to that person's spirit. There is no place in Calgary  
2 for us to do that.

3 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And do you know in the  
4 work that you've done of other places across the country  
5 where an Indigenous person might go in the way that you've  
6 just described so well?

7 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think there are  
8 some places. I think Winnipeg has in their -- in  
9 the -- the City of Winnipeg has through Oodena, they call  
10 it, and it's a monument for missing and murdered Indigenous  
11 women, so I think they do have a place. They also have the  
12 Thunderbird House. And there are other -- I believe other  
13 friendship centres across the country that provide space,  
14 but it's notice specific to -- to that -- to the sacred  
15 place to remember missing and murdered women.

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay, thank you. I'm  
17 just going to -- I think we could probably spend a lot of  
18 time on each one of these recommendations.

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

20 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** But you understand by now  
21 the constraints of the process, so when I move to the next  
22 one, it's not because I don't think there's more to hear on  
23 that topic.

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So just if we can

1 look at to create a family -- to create a provincial  
2 Aboriginal advisory committee on family violence, have you  
3 had any success at creating that?

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Actually, we did several  
5 years ago. And I'm going back, and so it's going to be  
6 very difficult to try to articulate this because back in  
7 19 -- not '78, but 1997, I believe, was the Aboriginal  
8 Round Table on family violence and bullying, and at that  
9 time, an Aboriginal advisory committee was established, and  
10 the new province came in and it was done. They just kind  
11 of wiped it off the -- off the radar and it no longer  
12 exists. Part of the repercussions of that is the provincial  
13 framework on family violence and bullying is silent of  
14 Indigenous women's concerns and issues and recommendations.

15 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So when we look to  
16 recommendations like this that require some political --  
17 well, when -- when the funding for that is attached to an  
18 agency that's funded a government which changes, then the  
19 -- you're put in jeopardy --

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, yes.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay, and I'm going to  
22 deal with funding on a more broader basis in a minute.  
23 Wanda talked about Recommendation 5, Inclusion in the  
24 Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A Framework in Family  
25 Violence -- about a document. So has -- have you been --

1 has the Indigenous perspective been included in that  
2 document?

3 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

4 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we haven't, although  
6 I've advocated several times, and my Board has advocated.  
7 I'm going to give you an example of just how that works  
8 here in Alberta. I mean, it just seems that, you know, you  
9 can paint a pretty picture of -- of -- you know, of all  
10 these investments, so to speak, but we -- and all the  
11 shelters in Alberta are -- are funded provincially with --  
12 other than the First Nation shelters. And there are funded  
13 agencies that -- that -- I believe by excluding Indigenous  
14 women because -- because we don't pay a membership or we  
15 don't have the monies --

16 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Yes.

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- in our budget to pay  
18 a membership, so therefore we're excluded from the  
19 provincial map. There is a map of -- you can click on and  
20 then you reach a shelter. We're -- we're excluded from  
21 that. We are excluded from the 1-8666 (sic) number, the  
22 toll-free number. If I was to sit in my shelter from my  
23 boardroom and call the 1-866 number, I would be directed to  
24 another shelter in the city.

25 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Wow.

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** So this is -- this is  
2 what happens. And -- and the membership fees are -- are,  
3 you know, more than \$2,000. And when you're -- when you  
4 don't have that kind of money or you're trying to leverage  
5 your -- your areas, other places.

6                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So recommendation  
7 directed at getting around that would be appreciated, I'm  
8 sure. So I'm going to skip Recommendation 6, since it goes  
9 to the calling of a National Inquiry. Recommendation 7:  
10 Creating culturally appropriate services for families who  
11 are impacted. And you give examples of court support  
12 attendance, liaison, police and families, and we've heard  
13 from Nakuset how useful and crucial having somebody who can  
14 put a foot in both worlds for an Indigenous person.

15                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

16                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Does that funding or  
17 those positions created?

18                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

19                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

20                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** They haven't been. I --  
21 I have to say that Victim Services in Calgary has -- they  
22 had -- they don't exist for Indigenous people. And there  
23 have been many cases in the last few years where if we had  
24 a strong non-police led Victim Services support, I think  
25 families would have been looked after very well.

1                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So even a separate  
2 dedicated fund for delivery of victim services for  
3 Indigenous people by Indigenous people?

4                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. I mean,  
5 there was one woman whose -- whose daughter was killed and  
6 she went to Victim Services and -- and the guy said to her,  
7 Well, how -- how do you expect us to help you? Rather than  
8 using a trauma-informed --

9                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So I'm going to --  
10 I'm going to skip the last two recommendations. Maybe you  
11 can just tell me a yes or no because I want to get to a  
12 couple of other questions. Do you feel that recommendation  
13 8 has been met?

14                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

15                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And recommendation  
16 number 9 to continue to -- to provide --

17                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No.

18                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** No, okay. And I'm sorry  
19 for the people who are following along and don't have the  
20 report in front of them, but I'm not reading it out. So I  
21 just want to talk a little bit -- we've talked a lot about  
22 problems. I want to talk a little bit more about what good  
23 looks like.

24                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

25                   **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Because I think

1 the shelter system provides such a model of what good can  
2 look like. So -- and using the -- let me just see if I  
3 heard correctly, (speaking in Native language).

4 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** (Speaking in Native  
5 language).

6 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I'm going to work  
7 on that. Living a good life, but just how to do that,  
8 because as I understand it, the shelter exists -- is the  
9 shelter -- your time in the shelter limited. If you come  
10 to a shelter, is it an indefinite period of time that you  
11 could stay?

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, no. No, it's not.  
13 The -- at least in Alberta it's 21 days. But we have had  
14 families stay for 30, 40, 50 days, depending on their  
15 circumstances. So -- but the time is limited, so -- and  
16 this is really unfair to the families who come into the  
17 shelters because I believe we expect that miracles are  
18 going to happen. One, she's coming in usually with two to  
19 three kids. She's very traumatized and so are the  
20 children. She may have not slept for days.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** She may be coming in  
23 with injuries that we can't see, and so are the children.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** She may have not eaten



1 for two days, and so we expect her to keep her life  
2 together, to live in a -- a somewhat structured environment  
3 with a whole bunch of other strangers and to -- and to keep  
4 her mental health together. We expect her to find income  
5 support. We -- we also expect that housing supports will  
6 be met within 21 days, which is just not acceptable for --  
7 for the issues that they're coming in with.

8 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And -- and those  
9 issues may be childhood sexual trauma --

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely. It's all of  
11 it. It's --

12 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** It -- you've -- you've --  
13 yeah, okay. You've -- you've explained the challenges and  
14 the impact -- the war injuries, essentially. So in order  
15 to help that person live a good life and transition from  
16 either the family violence, the sexual trauma, the  
17 addiction issues that they're suffering or even  
18 transitioning out of a life where the money that has  
19 sustained them has come through their own exploitation?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

21 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** So are there programs in  
22 Alberta, in Ontario or in Quebec that will help people live  
23 safely with the support of a healing lodge, transition  
24 through life skills development, also career skills  
25 development?

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** M'hm. There's parts of  
2                   it. I think it's very fragmented. I mean, we -- we -- we  
3                   offer support through our outreach and follow-up program,  
4                   and we do that up to six months. But quite often within  
5                   that six months we -- depending if -- if the woman and  
6                   children will -- will go back to -- to their home  
7                   community, and then they may come back into Calgary, and  
8                   there may be homelessness involved. There may be another  
9                   pregnancy, there may be addictions or there may be a very  
10                  serious illness as well.

11                  **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. So what would --  
12                  what would good look like in that second stage where you go  
13                  beyond the shelter and the outreach in terms of that second  
14                  stage transitional housing and longer term, sort of,  
15                  connected with a skill development?

16                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think  
17                  recognizing that -- that healing process is a very long  
18                  process. I mean, individuals heal at various -- at -- at  
19                  different -- different rates and times, and -- and having  
20                  longer terms supports indefinitely, a minimum of a year,  
21                  possibly a maximum of four years where we have all of those  
22                  things that we've talked about already around the -- the  
23                  supportive counselling, the peer support, the trauma  
24                  informed, the historical grief supports, the -- the Elders,  
25                  the -- the trauma informed psychologists, health supports,

1 justice supports. I think all of those areas need to come  
2 together and do this wrap-around service for mom and the  
3 children on a very long-term basis. And I think it should  
4 be mom that should tell us that I no longer need your  
5 supports where she can begin to shed some of those  
6 supports, because quite often funding is also restricted to  
7 you will provide six months to this family and after they  
8 must exit. And so we no longer, at times, can provide  
9 those supports to families.

10 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And that six-  
11 month, like the aging out process of child welfare --

12 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

13 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- it's fairly arbitrary  
14 in terms of whether the person's ready for it or not?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. That's correct.

16 **SANDRA MONTOUR, NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously**  
17 **Affirmed:**

18 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. FRASER:**

19 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. I'm just going to  
20 ask, Ms. Montour, what you think good looks like in terms  
21 of helping women go from shelter existence. And you've got  
22 more capacity within your model --

23 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

24 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And maybe to how to build  
25 on that.

1                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We have our  
2                   Gayenawahsra program, which is, they are helping  
3                   themselves. It's a Cayuga word, and that's our second  
4                   stage housing. So individuals apply to reside there and  
5                   they can live there for up to two years, and even then they  
6                   can apply for an extension. And they have -- there is a  
7                   life skills worker that works with them as well as a -- a  
8                   child and youth worker that works with their children. So  
9                   there's after school groups that happen. There's life  
10                  skills groups that happen. There's parenting groups that  
11                  happen. There -- it's in a -- it's not -- it's a -- it's  
12                  in a -- they have their own community, so they are really  
13                  educated on the risks of each other. And who's -- who's  
14                  the risk -- the person to be aware of, and they monitor  
15                  each other. Because of staff are only there until, you  
16                  know, they're not there overnight. Like, it's not a secure  
17                  place, like shelter is, so it's more independence. And  
18                  it's what -- that is what it's geared to, is helping people  
19                  to help them find employment. Getting them hooked up with  
20                  the employment agencies within the community, whether it's  
21                  going back to school. We've had -- we've had people that  
22                  have been very successful in that program, that actually  
23                  went on to graduate with university degrees, and working  
24                  very, very -- doing very well today because of that  
25                  program.

1           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And there are a number of  
2 universities within proximity to Six Nations that would  
3 allow -- universities and colleges that would allow people  
4 to make that transition?

5           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. We have our own  
6 university, Six Nations Polytech, right within the  
7 community.

8           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** I didn't -- I actually  
9 didn't know that.

10          **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

11          **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Thank you. And so that  
12 would help because you -- there's a -- there's a skill --  
13 there's a culturally appropriate service within the  
14 community --

15          **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

16          **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** -- to help women  
17 transition. Okay, so just speaking of culturally  
18 appropriate, the next -- and I'm not meaning not get to you,  
19 but I'm running short on time. Would -- do you think that  
20 in terms of your federal and provincial partners, that  
21 Indigenous cultural competence should be a job requirement,  
22 like, bilingualism? Maybe -- sure.

23          **NAKUSET:** Sorry.

24          **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25          **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. So it's not just

1 about checking off a form after the day, and say, "Yeah,  
2 I've read the policy." It's actually you -- in order to  
3 have any contact with Indigenous people, you have to meet a  
4 certain culturally competent threshold?

5 **NAKUSET:** Yeah. You should have some, kind  
6 of experience. You know, you should have maybe done a stage  
7 somewhere in a Native Friendship Centre, or you know, there  
8 -- I'm sure there's other indicators too. But, yeah, it  
9 should be.

10 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And that training, and  
11 that standard of cultural incompetence [sic] should be led  
12 by Indigenous people?

13 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

14 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** All right. And, you know,  
15 white people would be, like, institutes. So I'm thinking  
16 about -- if you had -- you've talked a lot --  
17 of -- a lot of you we don't get to see each other. We don't  
18 get to go to conferences, there's no funding for that. We  
19 don't have a -- an opportunity to build our knowledge  
20 together, but to have a centre for excellence, or to lead  
21 the requirements for cultural competence in some  
22 recommendation, would you support? I -- I'm kind of  
23 thinking out loud here, but just in terms of -- you  
24 don't -- you're doing -- when you're doing all of the front-  
25 line work, you don't have an opportunity to create the

1 policy or make the demands. But to actually have  
2 the -- a -- a centre to create the kind of training programs  
3 that people who are working with Indigenous people should  
4 take, that should -- is that something that you would  
5 support?

6 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

7 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Definitely.

9 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Let's see. Four  
10 minutes, okay. So just coming back, Nakuset, what do you  
11 think, and you heard my questions about transitioning from  
12 the shelter experience. And what you've described in terms  
13 of shelter is much beyond what a person normally thinks of  
14 in terms of shelter, so I'm -- which is just a roof over  
15 your head. You've described a roof over our head. You've  
16 describe someone to be there negotiating with police, to  
17 doing all of this wrap-around service for your clients.  
18 So -- but beyond that, in terms of the transition for when  
19 people leave your shelter, what would good look like for  
20 you?

21 **NAKUSET:** Good would look like they  
22 are -- find affordable housing, that they have the career of  
23 their choice, that they have their children, that they're  
24 happy, that they have a purpose. That would -- that's what  
25 good looks like. Now, how you get them there, you know, is

1 -- you know, there are many steps and there are many  
2 different services because everyone is different.  
3 Everyone's needs are different. It's -- there's not really  
4 one quick fix. And, I think, that's why, you know, the  
5 shelter we have so many different kinds of staff, depending  
6 on what their needs are. Yeah.

7 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And just, sort of,  
8 picking up that from the funding perspective, would it  
9 assist you, if you were to flip the funding model on the  
10 head and say -- and to say, for it to be -- instead of you  
11 saying, "I'm going to get \$70,000 from Health Canada, and  
12 I'm going to \$50,000 from Corrections because the work we're  
13 doing is keeping people out of the jail system. And then  
14 I'm going to get some from INAC and some -- " Would it  
15 assist you to say, "This is how much money that I need."  
16 That the funding process changed, where the Federal and  
17 provincial and municipal partners got together and said,  
18 "We're going to have one funding stream because people want  
19 to do the work. And then we'll fight about who -- who's  
20 accountable for it." That would probably help you?

21 **NAKUSET:** That would be great in a perfect  
22 world.

23 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. Sandy's nodding  
24 her head.

25 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.



1           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Josie's nodding her head.

2           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

3           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay.

4           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

5           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** And I've seen from those  
6 -- my own work and in -- and in non-Indigenous organization,  
7 not-for-profit, that those funding proposals come completely  
8 at random. And you get notice that you have to -- "We've  
9 got this money you can apply for, but we need your proposal  
10 within 48 hours."

11           **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

12           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

13           **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

14           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** You -- have you all  
15 experienced that?

16           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah.

17           **NAKUSET:** Yeah.

18           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. Absolutely.

19           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Right. And so you might  
20 be in the middle of some crisis, you might be in the middle  
21 of some initiative, but in order to access this extra  
22 \$30,000, \$10,000, you got to pull something together within  
23 a very short period of time.

24           **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25           **NAKUSET:** That's usually more the norm.

1           **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. And just -- if  
2           there's anything else you would like to say, in terms of  
3           building up either the capacity of your organization or the  
4           women you serve, of what would be assistance, I would be  
5           interested to hear from you, starting with Ms. Nepinak.

6           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think I would  
7           like to see second stage because, quite often, women who  
8           leave the -- the Lodge may end up coming back. Although, it  
9           -- and -- and the presenting issue may be around  
10          homelessness as opposed to violent situations. So I believe  
11          that if we were able to -- to help her transition through a  
12          transition home, that we would have greater success as well.

13          **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Ms. Montour.

14          **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I would like to see more  
15          focus as well on the children and youth. You know, we do  
16          have a -- a youth -- eight-bed youth residential facility,  
17          also, under us for individuals who -- children and youth  
18          have been impacted by family violence and sexual abuse.  
19          And, I think, there -- there needs to be more attention to  
20          children's mental health residential services. Because  
21          right now, when the government gives money to mental health  
22          services, it goes to the day programs and -- and we get left  
23          out of it. So they need to really focus on the residential  
24          mental health for -- for our kids. But, yeah, really,  
25          really, also agreeing, there needs to be more -- I mean,

1 we've talked about the need for more housing too. Like, we  
2 have nine -- a nine-unit facility, but we need more. We  
3 really do need more units for -- designated units for family  
4 violence prevention.

5 **NAKUSET:** For sure the housing is huge. You  
6 know, in a perfect world, I'd also like to have a better  
7 working relationship and funding for services for those that  
8 are in jail. Sometimes people chose to go to jail because  
9 they have nowhere to live, and it's a warm place, you know,  
10 for the winter months. So if we have better services and  
11 collaborations with jails, that would be ideal. So -- and  
12 -- and half-way houses, we don't have Indigenous half-way  
13 houses in the city, and they fall through the cracks.

14 **MS. SUSAN FRASER:** Okay. Thank you, all,  
15 very much. My time is up. And thank you, Commissioners.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Ms.  
17 Fraser. We would like -- we would like to call the  
18 Aboriginal Women's Action Network, Ms. Fay Blaney. Ms.  
19 Blaney's only requested one minute.

20 **MS. FAY BLANEY:** Good afternoon. I am Fay  
21 Blaney, and this is MiKenze Jordan. And I want to  
22 acknowledge the other Aboriginal Women's Action Network  
23 members, Donna Dickison, Florence Hackett, Laura Holland,  
24 Amy Manyguns (ph), Ruby Langan (ph), several others that  
25 I'm probably forgetting.



1                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Chief Commissioner  
2 and Commissioners, there's been a request for a break, and  
3 this actually happens to be a good point for our afternoon  
4 break. I'm going to request that it is a 15-minute break so  
5 that we can get through -- there's cross-examination by  
6 Commission counsel left, questions that Commissioners may  
7 have, as well as re-exam. So if it could be 15 minutes,  
8 that would be great.

9                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes, 2:55,  
10 please.

11 --- Upon recessing at 2:41 p.m.

12 --- Upon reconvening at 3:01 p.m.

13                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** If we may  
14 recommence. Next up we are calling Commission Counsel  
15 Jennifer Cox. Jennifer Cox will only be allowed to ask  
16 questions actually of Josie Nepinak because I have led  
17 evidence for the other two witnesses. And Ms. Cox will  
18 have the same that all parties had as standard, which is 19  
19 minutes.

20                   **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Good afternoon  
21 Commissioners, witnesses. I would like to extend thanks to  
22 the Treaty 7 area, as well as the Métis 3 Nation and the  
23 Blackfoot people for this week, and the prayers of all of  
24 the Elders that have helped us to get through what has been  
25 a pretty busy week for us.

1       **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

2       **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. COX:**

3                   **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Josie, before I get  
4 started, I did show you a document earlier, and  
5 Commissioners I did provide a copy to you as well, and the  
6 parties with standing have also been given a copy of the  
7 document, and it's titled, "Family Violence Prevention  
8 Programs Off Reserve."

9                   Josie, I'm wondering, is that something that  
10 you're familiar with?

11                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I am, and I did see  
12 the call for proposals.

13                   **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay, so, Commissioners,  
14 I'm wondering if I could have that marked as an exhibit,  
15 please?

16                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes, the  
17 violence prevention -- Family Violence Prevention Program  
18 Off Reserve Called For Proposals 2018-2019, is Exhibit 56,  
19 please. No, I'm sorry, 55.

20       **--- EXHIBIT NO. 55:**

21                   "Family Violence Prevention  
22 Program: off-reserve call for  
23 proposals 2018-2019," Indigenous  
24 and Northern Affairs Canada, date  
25 modified May 3, 2018 (four pages)

1           **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Josie, I'm just  
2 wondering if I could ask you a couple of questions about  
3 that. So you've --

4           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

5           **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So you've indicated to me  
6 that you had seen that call for proposals, I'm wondering,  
7 were you able to access that source of funding?

8           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we didn't. And I  
9 didn't apply, either.

10          **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

11          **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It was a \$50,000 grant.  
12 Can I talk about -- a little bit about my experience  
13 with -- or should I wait for your question?

14          **MS. JENNIFER COX:** No, you can -- you can  
15 talk.

16          **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. In the past we  
17 have had funding from -- from this particular body and we  
18 have -- it's a very cumbersome process to go through and  
19 the money doesn't come. For example, this was for our  
20 health program, and we had to wait ten months for funding,  
21 making phone calls, trying to track the money to have it  
22 sent out and -- but it is a very slow process.

23                   And in the meantime, as a healing lodge and  
24 a not-for-profit organization as well, we have to still pay  
25 the bills, right, without this funding that's earmarked for

1 particular programming. So we're taking from Paul to pay  
2 Peter, which is not a good management practice, and  
3 certainly not something that would be -- you know, that our  
4 auditor looks down upon as well.

5 So -- and for \$50,000, I'm not saying that  
6 that's not a lot of money, but to hire a staff person  
7 within a very short window of time, as well, is -- is very  
8 difficult. And does that constitute a full time? Because  
9 they also say, well, here's what you need to do, it needs  
10 to be earmarked for this, so now you have to think, okay,  
11 so how is -- what is this going to look like, where is this  
12 going to fall under in terms of the programs and supports  
13 that we do at the shelter. So it's been a very -- a very  
14 difficult process at times.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So this particular  
16 program is not something that would -- it's  
17 too -- basically what I'm hearing from you, correct me if  
18 I'm wrong, is that it's too difficult to access these  
19 funds?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** It can be very difficult  
21 as well, and I think when -- you know, as an administrator  
22 in the lodge I have to consider where my leverage area is,  
23 you know, in terms of energy, and in terms of  
24 where -- where do you put that time for your greatest  
25 return, and that is usually with the families and with the



1 staff that we have.

2 MS. JENNIFER COX: And --

3 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: The other thing I wanted  
4 to say is there's no guarantees for long-term or sustained  
5 funding for those grants as well.

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: So just getting back to  
7 the time that you mentioned, you have to decide -- I guess  
8 your evidence would be that it's too difficult, there's too  
9 much time required just to apply for \$50,000?

10 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Oh, yes, absolutely.

11 MS. JENNIFER COX: And can I ask, has  
12 anybody ever reached out to Awo Taan about this program?  
13 Have they ever talked to you about what ways could we make  
14 it easier for you to apply for this?

15 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: By email, they  
16 just -- you know, please see call for proposals and they  
17 send the link over, that's how we received it.

18 MS. JENNIFER COX: And have they ever come  
19 back to you and said, you know, you haven't applied?

20 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

21 MS. JENNIFER COX: They've never asked you?

22 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: No.

23 MS. JENNIFER COX: Have you ever had any  
24 conversations with anybody from the Family Violence  
25 Prevention Program?

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** A few years ago I did,  
2                   yes.

3                   **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. And I think what I  
4                   heard you say in your evidence earlier, perhaps yesterday,  
5                   was that you fundraise for the shortfall in your funding?

6                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

7                   **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And it's approximately  
8                   \$400,000 that you need a year to supplement? Is that what  
9                   I heard?

10                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, I didn't give that  
11                  testimony of \$400,000. We are -- we're more like \$200,000,  
12                  250, 300 thousand is what we require.

13                  **MS. JENNIFER COX:** For the extra, the  
14                  fundraising, the casino fundraising?

15                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** For the casino  
16                  fundraising, we use that for our health program.

17                  **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

18                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And that's approximately  
19                  \$67,000 every 16 months.

20                  **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. So I'm going to go  
21                  to what's Exhibit 46, which is also the Round Table report,  
22                  Josie. And you have that?

23                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, I have.

24                  **MS. JENNIFER COX:** You indicated to my  
25                  friend that you have that in front of you. And I'm

1 actually going to look at recommendation number 7 of the  
2 report.

3 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

4 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** I'm going to go a little  
5 more further into it, and it says that it's looking for  
6 culturally appropriate services for families who are  
7 impacted, for example, courtroom attendants. Would you  
8 agree with me that court workers for family law proceedings  
9 would be very helpful for your families?

10 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, there certainly is.  
11 And quite often what we do is if we have a very difficult  
12 case, we will pull staff from other programs to -- to go  
13 and attend and support the individual who is going into  
14 court.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** But would you agree with  
16 me that if there were court staff or people who were court  
17 workers working specifically in the area of family law,  
18 that that would be very helpful to your families?

19 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. Yes, absolutely.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And one of the things  
21 that you also -- I'm not sure if you're -- you also have  
22 collaboration agreements, other members of the panel  
23 mentioned that they have collaboration agreements with the  
24 local child welfare agencies or the local police?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

1           **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Would you agree that it's  
2           difficult -- even though you have those agreements, it's  
3           difficult to get the agencies to follow through with them?

4           **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely it is,  
5           yes. And I'm not sure who reads the collaboration  
6           agreements, I mean, at the policing level. And unless it's  
7           trickled down to the -- to the people who are on the  
8           streets who do the work, quite often that information I  
9           don't believe is shared.

10          **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And so would it be  
11          helpful if, perhaps, the Auditor General or the local child  
12          advocate looked at compliance with those collaboration  
13          agreements?

14          **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, that would  
15          be great.

16          **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And just for the benefit  
17          of those who may not know what a collaboration agreement  
18          is, I happen to have some experience in that -- with those,  
19          but for the most part, when it comes to shelters, a lot of  
20          those collaboration agreements indicate that child welfare  
21          agencies are supposed to contact you first for assistance  
22          to see if there's any way the child and mom can stay  
23          together, right?

24          **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

25          **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And would you agree with

1 me that there's a lot of times where they don't contact the  
2 shelter?

3 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: That's correct.

4 MS. JENNIFER COX: With respect to the  
5 funding issue, would you agree with me that just having an  
6 amount of money that's just basically emergency funding,  
7 where you have the discretion to provide transportation and  
8 immediate needs in those 21 days that you've indicated,  
9 that, you know, if you were given a lump sum from the  
10 Federal Government for emergency funds for transportation  
11 and some really key things, that that would go a long way?

12 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, absolutely.

13 MS. JENNIFER COX: And that you would be  
14 easily able to show how that money was being used, wouldn't  
15 you?

16 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes, that's right.

17 MS. JENNIFER COX: Without -- without big  
18 long reports.

19 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes.

20 MS. JENNIFER COX: And would you also agree  
21 with me that a narrative report or a report that's not full  
22 of numbers and all kinds of statistics and, you know -- that  
23 those reports are a lot easier for you to prepare?

24 MS. JOSIE NEPINAK: Yes. Narrative report.

25 MS. JENNIFER COX: Yeah. So -- and I'm going

1 to speak a little bit to the briefing note on -- that was  
2 prepared, so that's Exhibit 47. You recall -- you have that  
3 document in front of you? It's called "Briefing Note on Awo  
4 Taan?"

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

6 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And the reason that that  
7 was prepared was to help you with the funding, wasn't it?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right. That's  
9 right, to -- to show our funders that we are, in fact, doing  
10 really good work, and here's our literature, here's our  
11 evaluation.

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And you probably weren't  
13 funded for that, were you? You probably had to find the  
14 money.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we weren't funded for  
16 that. We had a little bit of money left in our -- what we  
17 call our SSR fund, and then we had to write letters to the  
18 funders to -- to ask them to spend that money for an  
19 evaluation.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Right. And if you didn't  
21 have to spend all that money and time just to find how you  
22 needed that money, you could spend the time with the  
23 families, your staff could have wellness, or ...

24 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely, but on  
25 the other hand, I think that the evaluation also provides

1 somewhat of a -- a blueprint that we're hoping that can be  
2 shared with other shelters or lodges across the country.

3 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And going to that point,  
4 one of the things that could happen almost immediately would  
5 be a -- a meeting or a summit in Ottawa with the Minister of  
6 Indian and Northern Affairs or Indigenous and Northern  
7 Affairs with the shelter workers to discuss all of your  
8 practices, to allow you to express some of your  
9 recommendations like we've heard today, and that would give  
10 you an opportunity to -- to be heard.

11 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Would that be fair?

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

14 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And one of the concerns  
15 that you've expressed, particularly here in the Province of  
16 Alberta, is that you don't get heard. It's hard for you to  
17 be heard.

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right, it is.

19 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay. You feel isolated?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, at times, yes.

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And so being able to have  
22 a summit with your fellow Executive Directors that run  
23 shelters, Indigenous shelters, across the country would  
24 provide you with the support, you know, in numbers.

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. The -- the support

1 and the energy and the motivation to -- to hear what other  
2 people are doing, because sometimes you feel like you're  
3 paddling your own boat, so to speak.

4 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And would it be fair to  
5 say that your ability to advocate with the shelter workers'  
6 associations -- so, here in -- in Alberta, you don't have  
7 the ability to advocate because you're -- you're -- you're a  
8 minority in that -- right?

9 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's right.

10 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So -- so if there was some  
11 advocacy at the Federal level on your behalf, would it be  
12 easier for you if there was more of a voice, a collective  
13 voice, from Ottawa that would support you in some of the  
14 initiatives?

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Made up of Indigenous  
16 women, absolutely.

17 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Those are all my  
19 questions. Thank you.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thanks, Mrs. Cox.  
21 Thank you, Ms. Cox. So that actually concludes the cross-  
22 examination portion of the hearing. At this point, I would  
23 like to ask the Commissioners if they have questions. Both  
24 Mr. Blain and I will have re-examination of the witnesses  
25 that I will assume will go after your questions.



1                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We're just  
2 going to take a five-minute break to get ourselves  
3 organized.

4                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Certainly. Thank  
5 you.

6 --- Upon recessing at 3:15 p.m.

7 --- Upon reconvening at 3:21 p.m.

8                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Chief  
9 Commissioner, Commissioners, I understand that you have  
10 questions for the witnesses.

11 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

12 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

13                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you.  
14 First, thank you to all the panelists and to counsel. It's  
15 been an absolute delight to hear your evidence and -- and to  
16 have you here today. Ms. Nepinak, I'm going to start with  
17 you because you're the closest one to me, okay? When you  
18 say "beds," you have a certain number of beds at your  
19 healing lodge, is that for adults, or does that include the  
20 children that come to the shelters with their mothers?

21                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

22                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So that  
23 could be one mother and seven children.

24                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** That's correct, and we  
25 have had one mother and seven children.

1                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You and  
2 the other witnesses have described how there's a common fear  
3 amongst Indigenous women that if they come to a shelter or a  
4 healing lodge, that they will lose their children.

5                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. That's very common.

6                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And that's  
7 become a barrier, actually, to women.

8                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

9                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** What do  
10 you recommend as a way or ways of eliminating that barrier?

11                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think the *Child*  
12 *Welfare Act* needs some reforms to -- to better protect  
13 mothers and children and not to use it as a -- a threat,  
14 because women have been told, you go to the shelter or we're  
15 going to take your children, or while they're in a shelter,  
16 the mom may be really struggling and for the -- and -- and  
17 -- and we often tell moms that Child Welfare can be a  
18 support service in order to access other -- other programs,  
19 such as child assessments, assessments for autism, et  
20 cetera, et cetera. But they are very, very fearful, so the  
21 -- they will rather not call Child Welfare to have those --  
22 those basic services, because then it means that they --  
23 they are vulnerable as well as their children. It's a real  
24 fear.

25                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So if

1 women, Indigenous women are -- mothers are being told, "You  
2 go to the shelter or we will apprehend your children," then  
3 the length of your waiting list becomes absolutely critical,  
4 doesn't it?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes. It certainly does.  
6 In one of our programs, our -- our -- it's called our Family  
7 Violence Prevention Program, 75 percent of the referrals  
8 come from Child Welfare and 99 percent of those  
9 -- of those cases have family violence as a -- as an issue.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** As I  
11 understand it, without going into a lot of details, you  
12 receive funding from both Federal and provincial sources.

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Mostly provincial.

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Now, if we  
15 think outside the box for a moment and consider your  
16 facility or facilities a true healing lodge, would it be  
17 more beneficial to you and the services you can offer to be  
18 designated as a health facility or a healthcare facility as  
19 opposed to something else?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** I'm not sure. I -- I  
21 like that, because I do think we focus on many of those --  
22 the -- the -- the holistic concepts that -- that encompass  
23 -- I'm -- I'm not -- but -- but I -- I like that. Yeah.

24 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.  
25 Thank you very much.

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Thank you.

2                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Ms.  
3 Montour?

4                   **SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

5                   **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

6                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm?

7                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** A similar  
8 question. You've raised the -- the barrier that many  
9 Indigenous women who are mothers face, that they have a fear  
10 of losing their children if they come to a shelter, or,  
11 alternatively, if they don't go to a shelter. What do you  
12 see as ways of eliminating that barrier?

13                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Well, there are some  
14 best practices that are happening in Ontario. There is --  
15 there are shelters that have -- that are very -- work very  
16 closely with Child Welfare so that the actual Child Welfare  
17 has workers in the shelter, located in the shelters. So, I  
18 mean, I think that's a good idea, and that's something that  
19 we have been wanting to do with our new Child Welfare, our  
20 new designated Child Welfare, Ogwadeni:deo. And our hope is  
21 that that person would actually -- we even talked about that  
22 person being an employee of Ganohkwasra rather than -- so  
23 that way, we could train that person. And yes, they would  
24 -- they would be more employees of us both, but they  
25 wouldn't -- and they definitely would be still there for

1 Child Welfare, but we would teach them to be more supportive  
2 and more -- to work with our families and to work with us  
3 rather than apprehending right away or doing the punitive  
4 approach.

5 So there are various shelters in Ontario that  
6 actually are doing that, and it's working. They talk about  
7 it working very well. You know, they talk about -- what we  
8 dreamed of is we dreamed of being able to have our -- our --  
9 our resident in, who's having problems with her  
10 -- with Child Welfare, but bring in the -- bring in the  
11 Child Welfare with our -- with our staff as well and working  
12 together and -- and ensuring that she knows, you know, what  
13 she needs to do. So I know that -- I agree there's a lot of  
14 hoop-jumping, that old system.

15 I think I'd also agree that there needs to be  
16 better -- better collaboration between the Ministry of Child  
17 and Youth Services and the -- and the Violence Against  
18 Indigenous Women sector. We need to be working better  
19 together, and I know in Ontario, we're planning to do that.  
20 Just some really good best practices. I know the Ministry  
21 of Child -- Ministry of Community and Social Services, they  
22 do things like they bring in the VAWP sector [sic]. And  
23 they consult with us before they do anything, so they --  
24 they're doing that with the Violence Against Women sector.  
25 And I'd like to see our Ministry of Child and Youth Services

1 also doing that, consulting not only with the Violence  
2 Against Women sector, but the Violence Against Indigenous  
3 Women sector.

4 So I think there's ways that we can work  
5 together, and -- and I know there's been a lot of -- you  
6 know, I know that Child Welfare system is trying to reform  
7 itself, and -- and doing -- they're trying, but I -- I just  
8 know that we still have a ways to go. So there's that  
9 possibility of -- of -- there needs to be a better working  
10 relationship. And I think those collaboration agreements,  
11 they could work too. They could work if somebody was  
12 monitoring what Child Welfare is doing, you know?

13 I -- I -- I'm -- I'm not legislated, I don't  
14 have no power to do that. I can only monitor what we're  
15 doing on our side, but somebody needs to be monitoring those  
16 -- those collaboration agreements. They're -- I think the  
17 tools are just -- they're already there. If somebody could  
18 monitor on their side and -- and make them accountable, like  
19 we're accountable, I think that -- I think it could work.

20 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you.  
21 You mentioned earlier today about hearing that one Chief and  
22 council spent money designated for a shelter for  
23 something --

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** -- other

1 than a shelter. I've heard, all across Canada, similar  
2 stories.

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

4 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** How do we  
5 hold our own governments accountable for the safety of our  
6 women and girls?

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I've thought about this.  
8 I really have, because it -- and it's happening, more than  
9 one shelter for sure. You know, it's happening more often  
10 than I'd like to admit out there. So, I mean, I thought  
11 about what the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario could do and  
12 -- and how we could help those shelters. Ideally, I'd like  
13 to see the money go directly to the shelters. Right?

14 So what I know that that's stepping on the  
15 Chief and council's toes, if -- especially if they have  
16 arranged that the money go to them first and then they --  
17 they transfer it to the shelters, however they do that. But  
18 ideally, I'd really like to see the money going directly to  
19 the shelters, and maybe there is more accountability that  
20 states on those -- those agreements that this money is for  
21 the shelter. You know, like, it -- they could still do  
22 something else with it, but I think they would have to be a  
23 little trickier about it. And, you know, I think that -- I  
24 know that INAC has tried different ways to make sure the  
25 money goes directly to the shelters because I know INAC was

1 aware that -- you know, they had concerns about this, so  
2 they've tried different things, but -- I mean, I even  
3 thought about ASOO, how ASOO could help because we're -- we  
4 are an incorporated organization, I thought about us, you  
5 know, but I don't -- I don't want to -- I don't want to  
6 ruffle feathers, I don't want to -- I don't want to sever  
7 our relationships with -- with those communities, that's not  
8 my purpose because I just want to help those shelters.

9 So I think there's ways that -- you know,  
10 maybe it's how it's written up with their -- with each  
11 Chief and Council, maybe it states in there that this money  
12 is to go directly to the shelter. Maybe it's ensuring that  
13 those shelters have their own bank accounts, you know, so  
14 that the money can be just transferred in that way, I'm not  
15 sure. I think there's ways if -- I think there has to be  
16 ways that we can do this.

17 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank  
18 you. I want to ask you a little bit now about aging out of  
19 the child welfare system and the youth beds that you have.

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

21 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** At what  
22 age -- or what is the upper limit for the age for youth in  
23 your youth facility?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Eighteen.

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.



1 Are they allowed to bring their children, if they have  
2 them?

3 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** If they have children,  
4 they would -- they would be probably in the shelter, more  
5 than the youth lodge.

6 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

7 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** We would -- we would  
8 bring them into the shelter and we would support them  
9 there.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** M'hm.  
11 From the continuum of care that you're able to offer, what  
12 do you see that are the biggest obstacles or obstacle to  
13 Indigenous women aging out of the child welfare system?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I -- I think that there  
15 needs to be -- I see -- what I see is there's -- what we've  
16 seen traditionally, I think, is the fact that once they  
17 reach that magic age they're just let go, all the supports  
18 just stop, and I know with all the reforms to legislation  
19 they're trying to change that.

20 I just think there needs to be more -- more  
21 wraparound services as -- as the youth age, age out of the  
22 child welfare system, more supports. They do so much  
23 better when there's family supports. And if it can't be  
24 family, maybe it's developing some other type of support  
25 for the youth as they're -- as they turn 18 because

1 it's -- it's -- you know, it's a hard, hard life out there,  
2 and when you have no supports, and I mean healthy  
3 supports -- so hopefully maybe more focus developing those  
4 networks and those supports for the -- for the youth before  
5 they -- way before they turn 18, so that they can have,  
6 once they do -- once they do start to age out of the system  
7 they're not just left alone, and they're not just out there  
8 vulnerable to human trafficking or whatever is out there  
9 for them.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.

11 Thank you, very much.

12 **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

13 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Nakuset,  
15 you mentioned a checklist that you use to put complaints in  
16 writing --

17 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** -- about  
19 racism. Would you be willing to share that checklist?

20 **NAKUSET:** Absolutely. I would have to email  
21 it to you, it's occurrences for outside appointments or  
22 something like that, but it's only I think -- well, we  
23 definitely have it in English, I'm not sure if we have it  
24 in French, we probably do, but, yeah, I can send that to  
25 you.

1                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank  
2                   you.

3                   **NAKUSET:** Am I sending it to you? Who am I  
4                   sending it to?

5                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Christa.

6                   **NAKUSET:** Okay, I'm sending it to her.

7                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank  
8                   you. You also mentioned this morning an empowerment fund.  
9                   Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

10                  **NAKUSET:** Like, in a perfect world if you  
11                  were to have that? Okay, I think every individual has  
12                  strengths, and I think that it's so easy to focus on all  
13                  the negative things of what's wrong with people, but if you  
14                  were to look at an individual and find that strength and  
15                  help develop it so that -- sometimes people don't even know  
16                  what their strengths are until someone actually points it  
17                  out and says, Hey, wow, you're really amazing at this. I  
18                  am? Okay, so let's work on it, let's develop it. And that  
19                  could be sort of their passion.

20                  So if we -- because I think, you know,  
21                  everybody -- you know, we're gifted with life, we all have  
22                  a purpose, and if we can help people find that purpose  
23                  through this empowerment fund, that would be a good life.  
24                  So, like I said, in a perfect world, but it could be done.

25                  **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay,

1       thank you. And again, the same question, the fear of  
2       losing the children being a barrier, if that's the correct  
3       word, to coming to a shelter, how do we address that?

4               **NAKUSET:** Well, you know, I'm not sure if  
5       it's the same when you're off reserve so much. I think  
6       that -- or maybe it's just the fact that people know that  
7       we are trying to work more with Social Services that they  
8       see us more like a safety net, like, they can come to us  
9       and that we have, you know, all the services that  
10      are -- that are needed.

11              But, for sure, there's still a lot of  
12      problems with youth protection and, you know, how she  
13      was -- Sandra was saying about trying to hold youth  
14      protection accountable to their honouring the  
15      collaborations, and that's why we have a research, we're  
16      doing a research with Dr. Elizabeth Fast into how all the  
17      youth protection workers at Batshaw are applying the  
18      collaboration, and that way you can actually sort of gauge,  
19      and also strengthen the relationship because we have focus  
20      groups and we find out from each division because it's all  
21      very complicated. And you have this EO department and this  
22      other one just for youth and one for those that are in  
23      special facilities, it's like -- it's crazy. But we get  
24      all of them to kind of sit together and have conversations  
25      about what is working, what is not working, what do you

1 know about Indigenous services, what are your difficulties,  
2 how can we help.

3 And then eventually we want to create a CIG,  
4 which is a clinical integration group because this would  
5 actually be mandated by Batshaw that their staff have to  
6 attend and have to work on this particular issue.

7 They used to -- they had one for sexual  
8 assault and it was sort of mandatory, now we want it to be  
9 for this group, for the Indigenous kids in care. So -- so,  
10 yeah, I suggest, Sandra, you get a research, get a  
11 research.

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you  
13 all three. Thank you very much.

14 **NAKUSET, JOSIE NEPINAK, SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously**  
15 **Affirmed:**

16 **QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS:**

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*  
18 *beaucoup.*

19 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Just give us a second to  
20 get set up here and get her going on her translation.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*  
22 *beaucoup. Bonjour, Josie. Vous savez, je veux commencer,*  
23 *pis ça, je suis fidèle à moi-même, c'est mon style pis je*  
24 *vais rester fidèle à moi-même. Lorsque c'est cette*

1 période-là. Il y a une façon de poser de questions parce  
2 que des enquêtes c'est des enquêtes mais moi, je l'a fait  
3 toujours différemment mais ça revient au même. Je veux  
4 vous dire un gros, gros merci pour votre courage. Je veux  
5 vous dire merci pour la force que vous avez de continuer.  
6 Vous avez mentionné que vous sauvez des vis, vous avez  
7 mentionné que vous avez donné un empowerment à des femmes  
8 et des enfants que vous avez réunit. Des enfants séparé de  
9 leurs mères. Vous avez fait beaucoup, beaucoup de magie,  
10 beaucoup, beaucoup de magie puis plusieurs entre nous  
11 connaît très bien les sacs de poubelles parce qu'on à du  
12 quitter d'urgence une nuit sans voiture, sans argent et se  
13 retrouver dans des centres d'hébergement. Mais mon époque,  
14 il n'y avait pas d'hébergement en milieu autochtone ou pour  
15 recevoir des femmes autochtone alors j'ai toujours une  
16 grande, grande admiration pour ces femmes-là, qui sauvent  
17 des vis, qui a sauver ma maman, et ma maman aujourd'hui  
18 redonne à la communauté parce que justement, il y a des  
19 gens comme vous qui l'on aidé. Je vais essayer, je vais  
20 commencer avec la communauté Six Nations.

21 Ma première question pour vous, est-ce que  
22 vous recevez du financement de base du Ministère qu'on  
23 appelait avant INAC?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

1                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Est-ce que ce*  
2                   *financement de base là ressemble ou est l'équivalent des*  
3                   *maisons d'hébergement non-autochtones en Ontario?*

4                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** INAC doesn't fund --  
5                   INAC doesn't fund the mainstream shelters in Ontario. So  
6                   our -- so --

7                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** My question  
8                   was -- I'll ask in English for you.

9                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Okay.

10                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** This part now,  
11                  because it's easier in English for me, but there's a part  
12                  that it's going to be in French. I know INAC, you saying is  
13                  financing you, because you're in a community.

14                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

15                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay? Core  
16                  funding.

17                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

18                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And the non-  
19                  Native women shelter, the non-Native women outside of your  
20                  territory, it's coming from the Ontario government?

21                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

22                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Do you -- do  
23                  you know how much they receive in core funding?

24                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No, I don't know. And  
25                  that's why Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario wants to do this

1 research, to find out to really concretize what the  
2 difference really is. So how much funding they're  
3 receiving.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And how much funding  
6 we're receiving. And to -- to -- to see what the difference  
7 really is. That research needs to be done, and that's  
8 something that we are planning to do, as -- as an  
9 association.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Is that a  
11 recommendation to support this?

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, please.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And is  
14 -- is it something that it should apply to across Canada,  
15 this recommendation?

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** You know, if I can talk  
17 about the very first time I came to a gathering of Murdered  
18 and Missing Indigenous Women, out in Vancouver I believe it  
19 was, I remember -- what I remember -- one of the things I  
20 remember the most was all the shelters that came up to the  
21 microphone, begging for help, asking, saying how underfunded  
22 they were, and needing help.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** And -- and asking,  
25 begging for help. And I -- that really struck me because I



1 knew exactly what they were saying. They were talking about  
2 the comparison, the wage, the --

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- the funding disparity  
5 that exists in Canada. And they were begging for help. So,  
6 yes, I think that needs to be done across Canada.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. In  
8 2000, in -- in '98 I think it's where Nakuset, you started,  
9 in those -- those years, in '98?

10 **NAKuset:** I started the shelter in 1999.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** '99, okay.

12 INAC was funding shelters across Canada to an amount of  
13 \$100,044 -- *Cent quarante-quatre mille in English?* \$144,000  
14 for 16 bed in 1998. Now we're able to see true -- what the  
15 women push, of course, over the years. That the average  
16 it's 450 -- \$450,000. *Quatre cent cinquante mille.* For --  
17 \$450,000. I am getting better. For 16 bed. For a non-  
18 Native in Quebec shelter for the same services, not  
19 culturally, we -- we talk about core funding. For the same  
20 amount of bed, 16 beds, it's almost \$900,000. So there is I  
21 guess, a gap.

22 You -- you mentioned that you have to be  
23 very, very creative, in order to -- to respond to the demand  
24 and help the women. You get from INAC, but do you get also  
25 from the province? I think, yes.

1                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, we get money also  
2 from the province.

3                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And is  
4 -- are you a regional for your -- for the First Nation, or  
5 it's only for Six Nation?

6                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** No. We are -- well, for  
7 the province, it's any woman.

8                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

9                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Any -- any -- from  
10 anywhere could come.

11                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. Good.  
12 *Merci Beaucoup.*

13                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And I -- I'm  
15 not aware about Ontario, but do you have any like, for  
16 Indigenous, and if you answered that, I'm sorry, secondhand  
17 -- second --

18                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Stage.

19                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Stage. *Merci.*  
20 Oh, you -- you do for Indigenous women?

21                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Second stage, yeah.

22                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Housing?

23                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

24                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You have?

25                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, we have nine-unit

1 second stage housing. We -- that was built in oh, I want to  
2 say in -- in the 90's it was built.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. But  
4 what about you, Josie? (Indiscernible) nothing?

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We don't have any -- we  
6 don't have a second stage, but we would like one.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Same thing in  
8 Montreal, Nakuset?

9 **NAKUSET:** We're opening one fairly soon. The  
10 City of Montreal has -- well, we found a location a couple  
11 of years ago, that's a couple of blocks away from the  
12 shelter. And the City of Montreal sent us a letter last  
13 week saying that we could have this building, so it'll be 29  
14 units of you know, for like, a three-bedroom apartment, two-  
15 bedroom, one-bedroom and what do you call it? Tiny little  
16 apartments? Studios. Studios.

17 And we're going to be trying to get funding  
18 through (indiscernible). There -- he knows all the  
19 different funders that would -- that we can apply for,  
20 however, I also sent Prime Minister Trudeau a letter, asking  
21 him for seven million dollars for the amount. And I sent it  
22 to Jody Wilson Raybould and the Minister Carolynn Bennett,  
23 because you know, they're trying to help Indigenous people,  
24 so they should fund us. We sent them floor plans and the  
25 budget and a beautiful letter. Haven't heard any response

1 from them yet, but we're -- we're waiting.

2 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** The beautiful  
3 things -- it's national. It's life.

4 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Oh, for sure a  
6 message went to the right place.

7 **(LAUGHTER)**

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*  
9 *beaucoup*. Thank you, thank you Madame Montour, and I have  
10 to say on a personal note, it was very, very touching, very  
11 beautiful the way you welcome us --

12 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- when we  
14 visited you many moons ago. Well, of course, with the  
15 Inquiry, I was there with a colleague, and Dylan Fern (ph)  
16 and we saw the beauty and the magic that you are doing for  
17 the women. So thank you so much. For the -- the -- the  
18 shelter who are not on communities, so Madame Nakuset and  
19 Nepinak, when a woman leave a community, you do receive  
20 women from communities, huh?

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely, yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** When they  
23 leave, and they go to your place, to your shelter, is the  
24 community still involved financially for all programs and  
25 services to support --

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No. It's --  
2                   it's -- it's just a shelter funds only.

3                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And does it  
4                   bring a challenge or difficulties?

5                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, it -- there's  
6                   always things that we need. For example, if mom arrives,  
7                   you know, she's -- she's got three little ones with her, you  
8                   know, we may not have the right formula in the house. And  
9                   formula is very expensive, as you know, diapers and you  
10                  know, we -- we need to ensure that we have the appropriate  
11                  -- well, the beds are there. They're already funded, right?  
12                  But there -- there's the issue of clothing often. Quite  
13                  often families have to leave with what they have on their  
14                  back.

15                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

16                  **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And so that's important.  
17                  So that -- that can pose issues. Absolutely. I mean, even  
18                  just around the city when -- when they're -- let's say for  
19                  example, they need to go visit a doctor or get some dental  
20                  work done, et cetera. We -- we give them one -- one bus  
21                  ticket to go there, and one bus ticket to come there -- to  
22                  come back. And so it's a tight budget in terms of  
23                  transportation. So yes, it does pose its challenges.

24                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm. And you  
25                  get, I -- I -- I didn't take the -- the notes. Same for

1 you, Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, because you're based in the  
2 city, is it from the province or INAC, the core funding?

3 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** From the province.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yeah. Also for the  
6 province. And in terms of the other question that you  
7 asked --

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah, sorry.

9 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- the Cree's, we  
10 get -- we can bill the Cree. So for services, if they refer  
11 the -- the clients to us sometimes they'll send clients  
12 because they want the client to utilize our addictions  
13 worker and our -- our therapist, and you know, to see our  
14 Elders, so they'll send them for like, a couple of weeks.  
15 And because they have more money, they can afford it. But  
16 that's probably the only community that -- that offers, I  
17 guess, financial help.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And  
19 we -- we've heard from Chief Commissioner and Madame Montour  
20 that when you're based on a community, it's an agreement  
21 with the Chief and council.

22 **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Right? You,  
24 Nakuset and Madame Nepinak, do you have to go -- is the  
25 mayor and the councilor, or -- administrating your funding?

1                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No. No.

2                   **NAKUSET:** For us it's -- it's the CS now that  
3 covers it. So, you know, and -- and we just have to, you  
4 know, do the statistics, which I presented, so you can all  
5 take a look at the statistics I've did for this year. And  
6 we have to have our AGM. And then we send in the report  
7 before, you know, the end of this month. And then we're --  
8 we get our monies.

9                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And my  
10 last question for you, Nakuset, we all -- about your list  
11 now.

12                   **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Your  
13 checklist.

14                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Checklist.  
15 And it's same for you, the other women from the -- the  
16 shelter, Madame Montour and Madame Nepinak. When a woman  
17 come and it's -- she -- she share her story like we've heard  
18 across Canada, that either the police or the system  
19 discriminated her, or something went wrong, or she didn't  
20 get the service that she was supposed to get, I'm sure -- I  
21 don't want to say I'm sure, but is it things that it  
22 happened to you also?

23                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Oh, absolutely. We hear  
24 the stories all the time about the dismissive attitudes of  
25 the police, and how difficult it is to -- to have services

1 from them, or to ask them to intervene when there is a  
2 violent situation.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Madame  
4 Montour?

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes, definitely. I -- I  
6 know that that is true. And a lot of it -- what we hear is  
7 -- a lot in Child Welfare. We hear that -- the way they get  
8 treated in the Child Welfare System. And we strongly  
9 advocate for them. And I know that they know that we'll do  
10 that. And -- so we are actually trying to have a better  
11 relationship with our Child -- our new Child Welfare System.  
12 We -- we only hope for the best because we have a new  
13 designated Child Welfare System at Six Nations. But we also  
14 have to work with the old Child Welfare System as well. And  
15 we're -- we're really hoping for a better relationship. We  
16 want things to change. Things need to change.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

18 **NAKUSET:** And, you know, at the Native  
19 Women's Shelter, it's pretty much across the board. So  
20 every single service provider they go to, they usually have  
21 difficulties. So that's why we always send out the staff.  
22 Because it's the staff that will put a stop to it. The  
23 women they -- they just take it.

24 I mean, you know, we had the -- there was  
25 a -- a particular woman at the shelter that I've known since



1 1999, and she -- she was abused, thrown around by a group of  
2 police officers at Cabot Square, and I was alerted to it  
3 after the fact. There were a couple of community members  
4 that got involved that made a report to the police and  
5 because I signed the agreement with the police, they were,  
6 like, "You -- you should do something." So the woman that  
7 got abused by the police, not only did she get abused by the  
8 police, but then she got ticketed in -- while she was in the  
9 ambulance, because they end up having to call the ambulance,  
10 they gave her a ticket. So I saw her at the shelter, and I  
11 was like, "Listen. I'm going to go and see the -- the  
12 police commander about this. Do -- do you want me to do  
13 that for you?" Because I need her permission. And she  
14 looked at me, and she was, like, "You would do that for me?"  
15 And that broke my heart. I'm, like, "Of course I would do  
16 that for you." So I did it, you know. And we're still  
17 waiting. That was two years ago. And it hasn't been, you  
18 know.

19 The first group of police officers, they  
20 said, "Oh, we did an internal thing, and we were saving her  
21 life." You were not saving her life. So then we have to go  
22 to the anthology, I mean, there's a French word for it, so  
23 you have to go the second step, and we're waiting. So she's  
24 still waiting for her day in court.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. When

1 you hear -- when they come to you with the -- those sad  
2 experience, do you officially, if they agree, bring them to  
3 the -- the Human Rights Commission, or Ethic, or a place  
4 where they receive complaint like that?

5 **NAKUSET:** We do when we can. And if they  
6 want to, a lot of the times they don't want to. You know,  
7 they're too afraid to do it. So the first part -- the --  
8 the first witness was from the Open Door, who saw it, and he  
9 put in the complaint. And then I was, sort of, like, taking  
10 the baton and then taking the next step because the woman  
11 was Indigenous, I signed the agreement, so I need to figure  
12 out what's going on. But we always offer that. But at the  
13 same time, we try to let the women know what they're rights  
14 are. We try to, sort of, guide them to all the different  
15 people that are working in, you know, Native Para-Judicial  
16 Services, or First Peoples Justice Centre, or you know, the,  
17 sort of, experts in the field to help them. So we're always  
18 referring, but really the most helpful is when we stand by  
19 their side.

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm. I -- I do want to  
21 say with the Six Nations Police, we've come a long way.  
22 Like, I -- we have an excellent relationship with them. And  
23 we've worked hard to make that happen, and I know they have  
24 too. So if there's a complaint like that, I -- I could call  
25 up the Chief and say, "What are you doing?" I know, and --

1 and he -- and he would explain to me what happened, or he'd  
2 apologize.

3 And, I think, for us the -- we have a high-  
4 risk committee that I co-chair with the police. I think  
5 that has brought us such mutual respect in the work that we  
6 each do. And so I -- I feel that if there was such a  
7 complaint that came to me, to my attention, I could just --  
8 I could even -- either text them, and say, "I need to talk  
9 to you, and I need -- you know." And I know they would  
10 respond, and they would -- they would sit down with me. And  
11 -- and if it's a mistake on their part, they would say, "You  
12 know what? We blew it. And so it -- we'll get this officer  
13 to apologize." So I know that we -- we worked really hard  
14 to make that happen, and so have they. And I've -- I just  
15 have total -- I have a respect for them, for the Six Nations  
16 Police and what they're -- what they're doing. I -- I  
17 believe in them.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* Madame  
19 Nepinak?

20 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** M'hm.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Do you bring  
22 them -- or follow, or support them?

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** We provide them with  
24 the -- with the resources, and the referrals. But quite  
25 often, as I mentioned, they are in the shelter -- in the

1 Lodge for -- for 21 days. And within those 21 days, the --  
2 the energy is very low. And -- and they're really concerned  
3 about the -- the immediate experiences that they've had  
4 around --

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

6 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** -- trauma and ensuring  
7 that -- that their children -- that they are okay. But we  
8 do have outreach workers that have supported staff to --  
9 supported women to -- to attend seminars on -- on human  
10 rights, and to -- and we encourage to -- to write a  
11 complaint if it involves the police. And we show them how  
12 to do that. And -- and, like others have already expressed,  
13 there -- there is a fear around doing that.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

15 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Because they feel that  
16 they won't be listened to.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm. *Merci*  
18 *beaucoup*. They feel listened by you and protected by you.  
19 And we have so many communities, and cities, village, and  
20 places across Canada that they deserve a place safe like  
21 you're providing. So *merci beaucoup*.

22 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** *Miigwetch*.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah, sure.

25 Sure.

1                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner  
2 Robinson?

3                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Hi. (Speaking  
4 in Native Language). I have a couple of questions for you,  
5 Nakuset, for clarification. And then the rest of my  
6 questions, I would like any of you, or all of you, if you  
7 feel you want to respond, to do so. I understand that  
8 Nunavummiut women, or citizens of Nunavik northern Quebec,  
9 when they're sent down for medical, they have access to  
10 interpreters, and transportations, and things like that. If  
11 you are a Nunavik Inuk woman living in Montreal, or a  
12 resident in Montreal, can she access those translation  
13 services that are available to those who are part this  
14 health provision system, between Nunavik and Montreal?

15                   **NAKUSET:** They would have to ask.

16                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

17                   **NAKUSET:** I -- I just met the -- the director  
18 of the new -- it's not called Northern Module anymore, and  
19 she's absolutely --

20                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Terrific.

21                   **NAKUSET:** -- amazing, the woman who runs it  
22 now. I have -- I don't remember her name off hand. I don't  
23 know if it's not medical related, if they -- it goes outside  
24 of their mandate I'm not sure if they're allowed to.

25                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay.

1                   **NAKUSET:** That's the problem.

2                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm. And  
3 then you gave us this scenario of a police officer or a  
4 frontline person refusing to speak English. With the  
5 language laws as they are in Quebec, and this is -- I've  
6 heard this from others as well, but it was told that that  
7 was the service provider's right, to give service in French  
8 and wasn't required to give service in English. Is that  
9 something you know about, whether that's okay to say, no,  
10 I'm going to speak French?

11                   **NAKUSET:** That is the reality of Quebec  
12 right now. So there have been horror stories where people  
13 have, you know, gone into the ambulance and the ambulance  
14 attendant will only speak French and not English, and  
15 people are freaking out because they don't understand  
16 what's going on. So it's pretty much across the board.  
17 You can go to the medi-care office and there's a big sign  
18 saying, you know, *La language française, tu dois parler la*  
19 *langue*. And that's why we always have to that send our  
20 staff with the women, because they don't -- if they don't  
21 speak the language, they don't get the service.

22                   It's the only way -- it's the only loophole.  
23 I can't force people to -- you know, to speak English, but  
24 when that woman needed to, you know, have a report done  
25 because her daughter went missing, that's crucial. He

1 doesn't want to, you know, talk to her in English. Jessica  
2 took care of that, she translated everything.

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And for  
4 Nunavik Inuit women and children who you work with in  
5 Montreal, the primary languages as I understand it are  
6 Inuktitut, second language is usually English or French?

7 **NAKUSET:** English.

8 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And how many  
9 do you know that -- how many do you encounter that are  
10 trilingual?

11 **NAKUSET:** There are a couple, but they've  
12 lived in the city long enough --

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah, yeah.

14 **NAKUSET:** -- to learn it, so --

15 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.  
16 Now, this is for -- for anyone who -- who wants to chime  
17 in. One of the things that I noticed in your -- all of  
18 your testimony, and yesterday from Ms. Anderson, and  
19 everywhere we go the importance of advocacy and navigators.  
20 And -- but that doesn't always have to be a lawyer, you  
21 know, and that's -- that's the other thing that -- when it  
22 comes to navigating these legal or administrative systems,  
23 there's this misconception that you need your law degree to  
24 be an effective guide.

25 We've heard from other women about the need

1 for Indigenous women advocates, and it strikes me that  
2 that's what you're doing in many ways. Are you funded at  
3 all for that specific work?

4 **NAKUSET:** No.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we're not. I think,  
6 if I can just -- please. It becomes part and parcel of the  
7 work that we do every day. If it is about supports for mom  
8 when she -- let's say for school supports, that her child  
9 is registered in the local school and how do we -- you  
10 know, we -- we send advocates or child support workers to  
11 be that bridge and to -- and to provide that transitional  
12 support, but quite often it is advocacy work. Because  
13 you're teaching often about family violence even to  
14 teachers who are receiving the children in their grade 3  
15 and grade 4 class, or grade 1, even the bus driver. So  
16 every day there is advocacy that happens on so many levels.

17 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, I don't  
18 want this to be interpreted as me recommending or thinking  
19 that the government should just create another pocket, I  
20 would envision that this be part of a more holistic and  
21 comprehensive way of providing financial support, but do  
22 you think that Indigenous shelters should receive funding  
23 for that type of work?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Can I answer that  
25 first --



1                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yes,  
2 absolutely.

3                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** -- that -- your last  
4 question? So at Ganohkwasra we -- actually, there was a  
5 call for proposals about, oh, I don't know, about six years  
6 ago, and instead of the three shelters applying and  
7 competing for the same dollars because there's three court  
8 systems within our Haldimand-Norfolk branch -- county.

9                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

10                  **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** This was just for legal  
11 advocacy. What we decided to do is we decided to split  
12 that one position into three shelters. So we get 12 hours  
13 of legal family court support work as paid for. But do we  
14 need more? Absolutely. So each one of those -- those  
15 other two shelters are mainstream shelters, so we share  
16 that. We didn't want to compete with each other because we  
17 knew two -- two of us weren't going to get it, so that was  
18 our -- that was our solution.

19                         So -- but do we need a full-time family  
20 court support worker? Absolutely. I think every shelter  
21 needs at least one. There's actually other shelters out  
22 there that have more than one because they're so busy, and  
23 that's just specifically for the court.

24                         But that advocacy is what our shelter staff  
25 do all the time, we're very good at it. We're navigators,

1 we help women and families to navigate the system. We're  
2 very good at it.

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. In  
4 terms of that right -- or that service being properly  
5 funded and being recognized as an essential service as  
6 opposed to a pilot project or a -- would you agree with me  
7 that that's how it has to be looked at?

8 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I'm seeing all  
10 heads nod.

11 **NAKUSET:** And I just wanted to say, I found  
12 the woman's name that I wanted to mention. Her name is  
13 Maggie Putulik, and it used to be called Northern Module,  
14 but now it's call Ullivik and it's an absolutely beautiful  
15 centre, and she does amazing work. And she's, like, crazy  
16 awesome, this woman, so you might want to ask her whether  
17 or not she would lend her translators for other services.

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.  
19 What I've -- we've heard a lot about how you are funded,  
20 how are you supported and use multiple different pockets,  
21 and there was a program, and I think, Nakuset, you  
22 mentioned it having been a source of financial support for  
23 you at one point, but the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, I  
24 believe it sunsetted in -- oh, just before my son was born,  
25 2009.

1                   **NAKUSET:** M'hm.

2                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, as a  
3 Commissioner, I don't -- you know, reinventing the wheel is  
4 not always the best way to start, so I'd like to ask what  
5 your thoughts were on how the Aboriginal Healing Foundation  
6 supported you? Was that funds you were able to access?  
7 Was that model of funding, did it allow you to do the work  
8 you know you need to do?

9                   **NAKUSET:** Can I answer that first? Sorry.

10                  **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** You go ahead.

11                  **NAKUSET:** Okay. So, yes, we received monies  
12 from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- oh, my  
13 goodness. So with that money we were able to do -- we had  
14 a sexual assault worker, we had a family care worker, we  
15 had a healing lodge coordinator, we had a clinical  
16 supervisor. We were able to get all the other -- program  
17 director, we ever got a student in the summer to help with  
18 the healing lodge because we sent the women away for, like,  
19 two weeks to this beautiful location. And with the program  
20 director we were able to get, you know, the art therapist  
21 in, and the Elders in, and the psychologists in, and we  
22 would have massage therapists in, and we have wellness days  
23 and we would -- so it was crucial. When they cut the  
24 funding, I was in shock.

25                   I think I was on maternity leave. It's so

1 funny you were talking about your baby that's, like, the  
2 same age as mine.

3 But, yeah, we were in shock. And then it  
4 was sort of, like, okay, now what do we do? So we're  
5 having a spirit walk on June the 16th, so we used to get  
6 two weeks for the healing lodge that we had through the  
7 Aboriginal Healing Foundation, now we have, you know, four  
8 days that we can fundraise from the community so we can  
9 send our women, you know, out of the -- out of the city to  
10 just breathe.

11 Then I had to find another family care  
12 worker and then I had to, you know, keep on my clinical  
13 coordinator because, you know, she's someone that really  
14 oversees all the case management, manages the stage  
15 students, you know, she has a lot of weight on her shoulder  
16 and we need the expertise. And when they cut that money,  
17 it's -- we -- we ended up, you know, absorbing that  
18 position through our core funding, because it's essential,  
19 and then we were trying to fundraise for other ones. I got  
20 monies at one point for the family care worker through  
21 ESDC, then they said no one year. Now, you know, I've  
22 applied through the McConnell Foundation. We'll see if  
23 they will continue with, like, well, I sent them a  
24 completely different proposal. Family care -- just for the  
25 family care system.

1           You always have to think outside the box and  
2           you also have to dream big, and this is what we're  
3           continuing to do. So we wanted -- we want to -- want to  
4           make sure that we have monies for the essential services  
5           that our women need and then we also have to look into the  
6           future about, okay, so this isn't moving fast enough. I  
7           have a collaboration agreement, I have the research of the  
8           collaboration agreement, and yet things are not moving fast  
9           enough. What would make it fast enough? Oh, okay, we're  
10          going to apply for that. So that's what we have to do.

11                 We have to come together and we have to dream  
12          big and then we have to find the people that are -- are  
13          open. Because if I had sent the same proposal to a  
14          different government agency, they'd be like, are you crazy?  
15          I sent it to someone else and they're like, oh, my God, this  
16          could actually work. So we like those kind of people.

17                 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes. We -- we also  
18          applied to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and -- and we  
19          were very successful and the programming was amazing. We  
20          were able to get our very first sexual assault supervisor,  
21          sexual assault counsellor, so people, for the first time,  
22          formally received sexual assault therapy at our -- in -- in  
23          our community. And we did groups and we did art therapy  
24          groups, we did -- we worked with men, we worked with  
25          children, we worked with adults, and we did a lot of

1 community education, and that lasted for about four years  
2 before it was cut. So that was our very first -- but there  
3 was a lot of healing that -- that Ganohkwasra was able to do  
4 with that funding.

5 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** And we've never accessed  
6 the Healing Foundation monies.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I think my last  
8 two -- one is a -- a -- a question in terms of the -- the  
9 National Summit and gathering, which I think is -- is  
10 -- gathering and sharing is so important and learning from  
11 each other. And you touched on this a little bit, but it  
12 -- would you agree that it's really important that these  
13 summits be sort of distinctions-based, that it not be sort  
14 of pan-Indigenous or -- and they're -- that it -- ensure  
15 that there's space for all nations? Inuit, Métis, and trans  
16 and two-spirited?

17 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes, absolutely.

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

19 **NAKUSET:** Yes.

20 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, I have to  
21 tell you that, since you guys have been on this panel, from  
22 the voices behind me as well as in the hallways and in my  
23 phone, how many women have said, "I want to do what they're  
24 doing for my community," and saying, "How do I start?"

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

1                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** First, in terms  
2 of the financial resources, would you recommend that there  
3 be money to facilitate women coming together?

4                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

5                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

6                   **NAKUSET:** Yes.

7                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Now, did you  
8 have -- and then, my last question is, do you have any  
9 advice, guidance, words for the women watching, listening,  
10 sitting in this room, on how to start?

11                   **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Well, I think it starts  
12 with a -- with a vision of the women in the community and  
13 that vision of healing and wellness. And to -- to bring in  
14 supports to do that, because most communities are not  
15 resourced to -- so it takes a lot of will, a lot of  
16 determination. I have a lot of confidence in the women out  
17 there because we women are warriors. We're -- we're  
18 fighters and we make things happen, you know. We've made a  
19 pot of soup with 50 cents. You know, so we -- we can do a  
20 lot of things that -- if we're put up to the challenge, and  
21 I do believe -- and I -- actually, I would like to challenge  
22 women across the -- across the communities. Let's do it.  
23 Give us a call, email, Facebook. Let's do it.

24                   **(APPLAUSE)**

25                   **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I can't help but think

1 of our founding board -- board of directors, who were a  
2 group of women back in the '80s that -- that were meeting at  
3 -- at their -- in their basements, in their house, and they  
4 -- they were meeting because one of our community members  
5 was taking in women into her house from abusive partners  
6 because she didn't want to go to Brantford. She didn't want  
7 to go to Hamilton. She didn't want to leave the territory,  
8 so she was bringing her in, she was bringing in women into  
9 her home. And -- and from there, that dream became -- they  
10 got more women involved and more women involved and they  
11 kept meeting and they kept asking people to help.

12 But definitely, there's a lot of shelters out  
13 there, and I think every community should have a shelter.  
14 That's my personal thought. So if you want to start one,  
15 just give us a call. There -- we will help you. More power  
16 to you.

17 **NAKUSET:** Because the -- the Native Women's  
18 Shelter is in the city, anyone who wants to get into this  
19 field in the city, you need your education. You -- you need  
20 it, and you need to walk between two worlds, because all the  
21 partnerships, all the people you're going to have to deal  
22 with are going to be non-Indigenous, so how are you going to  
23 be able to communicate with the language that they respect  
24 or honour or whatever you want to call it? And then also be  
25 able to almost translate the same sentence to someone who's



1 Indigenous and be like, okay, well, what she really means is  
2 blah, blah, blah. You know?

3 Like, and dare to dream. I mean, I've been  
4 working at the shelter, and when I worked there, they're  
5 only -- when I started, there was only ten staff. We're up  
6 to 24. I think that, you know, from -- personally, I'm the  
7 kind of person that, when I see an issue, I kind of look  
8 around the room, and I'm like, is anyone going to do  
9 anything? No? And then I step forward. And if I don't  
10 know how to do it, then I find the experts in the field to  
11 make it happen. So that's what you have to do, because I  
12 really -- I don't know a lot. I mean, I may sound like I  
13 know a lot, I don't know a lot. But I have a lot of smart  
14 friends that help me and push me forward and we go together.

15 We -- it's really about collaboration and --  
16 and -- and building bridges, and -- and we do it for our  
17 women. Because, you know, they talk about the next seven  
18 generations. That's our -- that's our job, to make it  
19 secure, you know? I would like to make my -- work myself  
20 out of work. That or it doesn't need to be a shelter. But  
21 we're not there yet.

22 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you all  
23 so much.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner  
25 Eyolfson?

1                   **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you. I  
2 did have a few follow-up questions for you all, but they  
3 ended up getting asked by my colleagues, so ...

4                   **(LAUGHTER)**

5                   **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So I think I  
6 don't want to be repetitive, so I -- I'm not going to ask  
7 you any questions. I'm just going to take this opportunity  
8 to thank you so much. It's obvious you're -- you're -- you  
9 have limited resources in your work and your time is  
10 precious, so I think we're truly blessed to have had you  
11 come here and spend this time with us and share your  
12 knowledge and your expertise. So I'm truly grateful. Thank  
13 you so much.

14                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

15                   **(APPLAUSE)**

16                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So Commissioners, we  
17 do have a redirect, but rather than asking for a break, I'm  
18 going to ask that we just stand for one moment, so I can  
19 confer with my colleague and then proceed into re-  
20 examination.

21                   **(SHORT PAUSE)**

22                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- in total we do  
23 have for their re-examination, 20 minutes. Both, Mr.  
24 Blain, I don't think we're going to take that time, but  
25 what I'm going to suggest we do 'cause we're both very

1 amicable to sharing the time, is that we set the 20  
2 minutes, but I just ask that you stop the clock when Mr.  
3 Blain's done just to give me a moment to start my  
4 questions, if that's an acceptable approach?

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes,  
6 thank you.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

8 **JOSIE NEPINAK, Previously Affirmed:**

9 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MR. DARRIN BLAIN:**

10 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Thank you. A late good  
11 afternoon to the Commissioners. My wife is upstairs  
12 watching this on -- online. This goes to one of the  
13 comments I just heard and all of the clapping. So I went  
14 up there with lunch and she met me at the door, and I said,  
15 How do you like that panel? And she punched her arms up in  
16 the air and said, "You go sisters."

17 **(LAUGHTER)**

18 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Josie, we had someone  
19 here from the Federal Government -- this goes to your  
20 comments about funding -- who painted a picture for us a  
21 few days ago that the funding for First Nations health in  
22 this country is something to be celebrated, it's a  
23 beautiful story, and it's something to get excited about.  
24 Those are her words. I notice that she's not here, I wish  
25 she would have been here to hear your -- your comments on

1 the -- on the panel. What we're hearing is that it's not a  
2 celebration, it's not a beautiful story and it's nothing to  
3 be excited about, but rather the way that you get funding  
4 for your organizations and the way that -- or the amount  
5 that you get is cumbersome, frustrating, time consuming and  
6 it takes away from the real work that you want to do. It's  
7 paternalistic and it's demeaning, correct?

8 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yes.

9 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** And I'm wondering if your  
10 funders -- you talked about the statistics that your  
11 funders like you to have, and all the forms that you need  
12 to fill out to get a few dollars --

13 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Right.

14 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** -- on a regular basis.  
15 We talked about periodic quarterly and annual funding, and  
16 that kind of thing. I'm wondering if the same people that  
17 hold your feet to the fire will let you hold their feet to  
18 the fire, and I'm wondering if there -- the agencies that  
19 you deal with regularly or ever, as a result of having no  
20 beds available, and having to turn Indigenous women and  
21 children away, ever ask you for the statistics on how many  
22 women have been killed, beaten, raped, left by suicide,  
23 lured into sexual exploitation as a result of not being  
24 able to come into your shelter?

25 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** No, we have never been

1 asked that question.

2 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Thank you. And my final  
3 question is this: I was unable to get this representative  
4 from the government, the good doctor from the government,  
5 to agree with me that this is of national importance, and  
6 this is of national concern, and it might even be an urgent  
7 concern. And she wouldn't agree with that, so I'd like you  
8 to respond to that. I'd like you set -- set the stage and  
9 bring the truth out, Josie. And my question to you in that  
10 regard is, from all the evidence that we've heard this week  
11 on the status or the state of affairs with respect to  
12 Indigenous women, safe places and shelters in this country.  
13 Are you confident enough to look at that Commission and  
14 tell each one of those Commissioners that this represents a  
15 national urgent concern that should receive principal  
16 consideration, fulsome consideration in the Commissioner's  
17 Report to the public?

18 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Absolutely.

19 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Those are my submissions.  
20 Thank you.

21 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah, can I just --

22 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Sure.

23 **MS. JOSIE NEPINAK:** Yeah. I -- I -- I just  
24 want to say yes, we are. We need to declare a national  
25 emergency with respect to the number of missing and

1 murdered Indigenous women that are killed. I talked  
2 yesterday about the war on Indigenous women, and how that  
3 continues to play itself every day. And until we have the  
4 -- the appropriate resources and supports on the ground,  
5 then that's not going to stop. We need to look at the  
6 systemic. We've already talked about some of those with  
7 the police and investigating the police and look at the  
8 linkages with -- with -- with other systems such as child  
9 welfare, residential school, how it all plays into the  
10 current state of -- of affairs with Indigenous women and  
11 how that places us further into dangerous domains. And so  
12 all of those systems together, and I have confidence that  
13 -- that you, the Commissioners, are going to take those  
14 recommendations and -- and move forward.

15 I'd also like to recommend some action.  
16 Let's -- some action to -- to get this work done. There  
17 have been other inquiries, there have been commissions,  
18 there -- et cetera, and unfortunately some of those have  
19 gathered dust on library shelves across this country, and I  
20 would like to say, let's -- let's not let this one lie.  
21 Let's move on.

22 We -- we have one kick at this cat and let's  
23 -- let's do it in a good way, and thank you so much for  
24 what you do. (Speaking in Native language).

25 **MR. DARRIN BLAIN:** Ms. Big Canoe.

1 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR, Previously Affirmed:**

2 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. I will  
4 be doing re-direct to both Sandy and to Nakuset. I only  
5 have, like, some clarification questions, because we've  
6 already heard a lot from both of you.

7 Sandy, earlier today one of my colleagues,  
8 Ms. Beamish, asked you about safety -- safety requirements  
9 and maintenance in terms of standards --

10 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- and you described  
12 a number of things that you have to do.

13 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** M'hm.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to ask  
15 you, are you -- do you know whether or not the building  
16 codes on reserve have different a standard than those off  
17 reserve?

18 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I believe there's a  
19 different standard, yeah.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if I -- if I told  
21 you or you just accept it as true, that the Federal  
22 standards for building codes on reserves are different than  
23 the provincial ones, and just for the sake of this  
24 question, you believed that I told you that they're higher  
25 for provincial, would you be able to tell me, based on your

1 own experience, if the on-reserve -- the actual on-reserve  
2 shelters are in buildings that are often dilapidated or  
3 need roofing or are not meeting the same building standards  
4 as you'd expect from off-reserve, would that --

5 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** (Indiscernible) safe  
6 houses. Just have to go to take a visit of one on-reserve  
7 shelter and go and visit one off-reserve shelter, and you  
8 would see for yourself.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And again, I don't  
10 like speaking generality, but you know, in terms of the  
11 ASOO members that are the Indigenous ones, do you know if  
12 each of those communities actually has a fire -- an actual  
13 fire station or fire services?

14 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don't know.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay.

16 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** I don't know. Each one  
17 of their -- our members, if they do or not. I don't know.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So just in  
19 your own experience in Six Nations, is there a fire?

20 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if there was an  
22 emergency or safety a concern at Six Nations, you would  
23 have a local response?

24 **MS. SANDRA MONTOUR:** Yes.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.



1       **NAKUSET, Previously Affirmed:**

2       **RE-EXAMINATION BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**

3                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**    Nakuset.

4                   **NAKUSET:**    M'hm.

5                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**    Earlier my  
6       colleague asked, and you've been speaking a lot today about  
7       all of the funding and the different pots and pools you  
8       have to go to.  And earlier my colleague actually asked  
9       Josie about the Family Violence Prevention Program off-  
10      reserve call for proposals.  It was Exhibit 55.  Are you  
11      also familiar with this funding proposal call?

12                   **NAKUSET:**    I am.

13                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:**    Did you guys make  
14      a call for the funding?

15                   **NAKUSET:**    Yeah.  So what happened was that  
16      this is something we applied for, and when we applied for  
17      it, we wanted to tweak it a little bit because I think that  
18      every woman that comes through the shelter has -- has lived  
19      violence, and because of 85 percent of our clientele, also  
20      deals with addiction, we wanted to kind of create a violent  
21      -- family violence and addictions program.  So that's what  
22      we submitted to them.  And it said that we could only have  
23      ten documents submitted, and some of those were letters of  
24      support.  We actually had seven letters of support, so we  
25      couldn't even include them all, which is -- you know, I

1 guess a good thing, but still we -- we sent in the  
2 application, which was, like, three pages, and then we had  
3 another -- another couple of other things. We had audited  
4 financial statements, blah, blah, blah. We sent everything  
5 in on time, and then I get an email from AADNC saying  
6 something to the effect that, Thank you for submitting, but  
7 our computers aren't able to decode the language in which  
8 you sent it. And I'm, like, isn't that ironic. They still  
9 don't understand us.

10 So I'm not sure what's going on with the  
11 computers at INAC because our computers aren't, like, you  
12 know, super, you know, wonderful computers, they're regular  
13 computers. We just sent the exact form that they sent us,  
14 we just send it back to them. They can't open it. Okay.  
15 So we -- you know, I -- I was concerned though, because we  
16 -- we submitted it by a deadline, so I'm like, "Does that  
17 mean you're not going to accept it 'cause you can't open  
18 it?" They're like, "No. No. No. It's our fault. So  
19 we'll accept it, but can you scan it or something so we..."  
20 the next day we re-submitted it.

21 Then they said, "Okay. Great. We're going  
22 to let you know whether you got the money, or you didn't get  
23 the money by mid-May." It's June. Time to start stalking,  
24 because we haven't heard from them, and that's something  
25 that we have to do. Can you give us an answer? Because we

1 have to plan.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

3 **NAKUSET:** You know? I mean, the -- the  
4 person that we wanted to hire to be the addictions worker is  
5 waiting to know, can I start work? Well, you know, I  
6 already applied for another -- the Echo Foundation from  
7 Montreal, and they gave us \$20,000, so we're going to start  
8 her off with 20, and I am going to motor to find the rest of  
9 the money. So it'd be awesome if they gave me an answer, so  
10 then I can look elsewhere, but that's an essential service.  
11 And that's the pitfalls of working with government forms.  
12 Hopefully they've upgraded their computer since.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. I have just  
15 one last question for the both of you. And I -- I'll draw  
16 your attention to the screen, 'cause this -- this picture  
17 actually comes from an exhibit that came -- oh. Sorry.  
18 This picture actually comes from an exhibit that was put in  
19 through Josie in relation to the report she wrote. And this  
20 morning one of my colleagues, Ms. Julie McGregor (ph), you  
21 know, mentioned the comment of you know, the -- the fact  
22 that it's been characterized as a war on women.

23 And so -- and we've been -- I think you can  
24 -- it's fair to say everyone's acknowledging you as  
25 warriors. But I've also heard a lot about wanting peace.

1 And I know that in terms of the words of inspiration and the  
2 Commissioner asked you that question about you know, there's  
3 all these women that want to do this, but what are the words  
4 that you think of every time you leave your space, your  
5 shelter at the end of the night that's of hope for the women  
6 in your shelters?

7 **NAKUSET:** What?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Instead of war, what  
9 other words, or what -- what -- how would you like to  
10 characterize when you think of the women that you're leaving  
11 in the shelter at the end of your work day, or the long  
12 hours; what is the hope? Or the positive inspiration you'd  
13 have for the women, instead of characterizing it as a war,  
14 what would you like it to be? And you first.

15 **(LAUGHTER)**

16 **NAKUSET:** Strong comes to my mind as you say  
17 that our Dawn Song.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

19 **NAKUSET:** Our Dawn Song is -- was actually a  
20 -- used to be a -- a war song, but because it was so  
21 beautiful, we kept it as the Dawn song. We call it the Dawn  
22 song. And it's a song that it's a -- it -- it means new  
23 beginnings. It means, for us at Ganohkwasra it means,  
24 "Looking to the east and seeing the sun come up."

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

1                   **NAKUSET:** And that's what -- that's what I  
2                   want for our women. that's what I want for our people, is  
3                   new beginnings. I want peace, respect. The good mind. The  
4                   great law of peace. All these things are -- are  
5                   what -- what I would -- I want for our -- our women. And  
6                   -- and joy. I mean, that's a -- that's something I pray for  
7                   every day, because you know, as a Indigenous woman myself, I  
8                   know trauma. I know -- I know what it's like to live in  
9                   trauma. And I know that very well. And I know what it's  
10                  like to live in grief. And I pray for joy. I want to know  
11                  joy. I want to know laughter. I want to know family.  
12                  Those are things I want for me, and those are things I want  
13                  for all our women. I want them to know joy, laughter, belly  
14                  laughs, peace, friendship, sisterhood.

15                  **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

16                  **NAKUSET:** Sacred sisterhood. That's what I  
17                  want.

18                  **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** M'hm.

19                  **NAKUSET:** You know, when I think of this  
20                  shelter, I had a colleague that came in about a year ago,  
21                  and we -- she was sitting in my office, and I'm on the  
22                  computer. And she was listening to the women in the other  
23                  room, the common room, and they were laughing, and they were  
24                  talking. And she looked at me, she goes, "This kind of  
25                  reminds me of like, a dorm at a sorority." And I thought,

1 that's a really good compliment, 'cause like, we're a crisis  
2 centre, but the women at the shelter, when they come  
3 together, you know, they find ways of -- of coping. And we  
4 often do it through laughter. But you know, when they leave  
5 the shelter, what we want for them is like, safety and  
6 empowerment. 'Cause as much as we can support them when  
7 they're in the shelter, they need to find those tools to do  
8 it for themselves, and for the next generation. You know,  
9 they -- they're -- they're the future leaders. Then they're  
10 going to be you know, working, bringing up the children and  
11 creating the next group of -- of future leaders. So  
12 whatever tools that we can give to empower them, to make  
13 them all warriors as well, that's what I want.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Those are my  
15 questions. Thank you very much. So in terms of formally  
16 closing the -- oh, sorry, I apologize. Chief Commissioner, I  
17 understand that you --

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** It's okay.  
19 Well, speaking of joy and laughter and empowerment, we have  
20 gifts for you. We were told by the matriarch on Haida Gwaii  
21 on the west coast to gift our witnesses, all of them, with  
22 eagle feathers. Well, you don't argue with matriarchs. We  
23 all know that.

24 **(LAUGHTER)**

25 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** So we have

1 eagle feathers for you. And I've learned across Canada that  
2 there are different beliefs about eagle feathers, but I  
3 think it's safe to say that there's some commonalities that  
4 eagle feathers lift you up and hold you up in the moments  
5 when you need to be lifted up and held up. And then when  
6 you dare to dream, they'll help you reach your dreams. So  
7 these are our gifts to you because you've given us more  
8 gifts than you can ever imagine.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I'll let you do  
10 that.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm sorry.

12 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

13 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Waiting  
14 for our official closing in ten minutes, please.

15 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

16 **--- CLOSING CEREMONIES**

17 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Check, check. It's  
18 funny I say, "check, check," on the microphone and -- and  
19 I'm thinking about something else at the end of that  
20 conference. Yeah, we -- we're prepared, Chief Commissioner,  
21 for the closing ceremonies, and I just wanted to say, we  
22 added as much as we could into the closing ceremonies. We  
23 even have a fashion show, so.

24 Just real quick, ladies and gentlemen, I'd  
25 like to introduce you to a -- a sister of mine. This is

1 Tasha Snow (ph). She's the -- one of the -- I think almost  
2 the youngest of -- of the late Chief John Snow. And  
3 Tiffany, if you could come and join here. Tasha has been a  
4 -- has been a care worker and a worker at -- for a number of  
5 years, Eagle's Nest is the shelter out in the Stoney  
6 community. Chief John allowed me to -- into his family and  
7 invited me, and so I'm an adopted brother. Tasha's also a  
8 seamstress for her children for the powwow and for ceremony  
9 where -- anyways, for Mother's Day, we had it arranged for  
10 Tiffany to have this dress. Tasha creates this dress, and  
11 it's created in honour of the murdered and missing. And if  
12 you look at the pattern, there's one woman in the dress  
13 that's wearing red. That's the dedication to the Inquiry.  
14 And so if any of you people out here would like to have a  
15 dress made, Tasha's here. And it's in special spirit and in  
16 honour of you all, so thank you, Tasha. Give them a round  
17 of applause here.

18 (APPLAUSE)

19 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Tasha will stick  
20 around. That's the end of our fashion show.

21 (LAUGHTER)

22 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: We -- we have a  
23 number of things that we're just going to kind of get  
24 through. And I'm going to invite Sarah to say a few words  
25 on behalf of the -- the Advisory Council, and again, we'd



1 like to honour Cynthia Cardinal, Melanie Morrison, and Myrna  
2 LaPlante, and Sarah's going to say a few words, and of  
3 course, our sister Charlotte Wolfrey is going to help us  
4 with the Qulliq as well. So I'll ask, Sarah, if you could  
5 come forward and say a few words in our closing?

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They're all coming  
7 forward.

8 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Oh, they're all  
9 coming. Okay. I'm sorry. Come on forward. Again, give  
10 them a round of applause for joining us here.

11 **(APPLAUSE)**

12 **MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** (Speaking in Native  
13 language).

14 **(LAUGHTER)**

15 **MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK:** Because I -- I wanted  
16 to -- okay. (Speaking in Native language).

17 You are amazing people, the ones that were in  
18 the panel. Strong warriors, wow. I wish I could be that  
19 warrior, like you guys. Wow. And it's good to know that  
20 you are helping women and children when nobody -- when  
21 nobody can take them. When people are just turning away.  
22 Wow. I'm -- I can only say "wow." You remind me of polar  
23 bear, you know, mother polar bear, strong, who's protecting  
24 her cubs, and you guys are like polar bear, protecting these  
25 women. Lot of little cubs. Protecting them. Polar bear is

1 strong and powerful to protect her babies, so I see those in  
2 those women that were speaking here. So thank you.

3 Thank you to all the parties for being in --  
4 sharing the work that you do. Good questions. Wow. You  
5 have amazing questions here, too. Thank you for the staff  
6 for making this happen, to all the staff that are here with  
7 us, and Blackfoot people for welcoming us here, *naqurmiik*.  
8 Welcoming us to the -- this place, beautiful place, Calgary.  
9 (Speaking in Native language) Where did I write it? Jason  
10 Goodstriker. Thank you. You're such a funny guy.

11 (LAUGHTER)

12 MS. SARAH NOWRAKADLUK: You make me laugh,  
13 you make us laugh. We really needed that. Thank you. And  
14 you're always welcome to come in my hometown, to Nunavik.  
15 If that will happen one day, you will be very welcome.

16 That's all I can say. A lot of -- seeing  
17 all of you great women here, wow, we -- together we are  
18 strong, all of you. All of you here, thank you for all the  
19 work that you do, everyone. We have to protect women and  
20 children, even men, even our men, so thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE)

22 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: Sarah, you're going  
23 to leave me here alone? I would say something too. I  
24 thought they were going to leave me, but they wouldn't do  
25 that.

1           Thank you, Sarah, for your powerful words.  
2       You're powerful, you're a polar bear, *nanook*, thank you.

3           And I'm going to say, I'm going to be kind  
4       of business like instead of heart stuff. I -- I too am a  
5       member of NFAC, and that's the hat that I've got on right  
6       now. I would just like to say thank you to the people on  
7       the panel who gave us the information that you gave us, and  
8       I really wished at times that I could jump in. Especially  
9       from the representative from FNIHB, I really wished I could  
10      have jumped in and asked some questions.

11           I would also like to thank the organizations  
12      with standing who asked the questions for us. Thank you,  
13      you ask good questions.

14           If I had one wish, it would be that all the  
15      provinces and territories would have a place at the  
16      hearings -- I've got to find my place again now -- so that  
17      the questions could have been specific to the realities of  
18      what Indigenous women are dealing with in their province,  
19      in their territory, in their community because the -- I  
20      think the Commissioners are getting a small glimpse of what  
21      is or what might be across the country, but I think that it  
22      is integral to make recommendations when you know what is  
23      across the country.

24           So I guess when I'm saying that, and I'm not  
25      a lawyer, but I'm going to use a phrase that I've been

1 hearing all week, would you agree --

2 (LAUGHTER)

3 (APPLAUSE)

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I love that word.

5 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: Would you agree to  
6 ensure that the Inquiry has time and resources to finish  
7 this inquiry right --

8 (APPLAUSE)

9 MS. CHARLOTTE WOLFREY: -- so that we can  
10 get it out there what the specific needs are of the  
11 territories and the provinces?

12 And to the Commissioners, thank you for  
13 listening. I don't envy you for having to sit hours on  
14 end. My butt was hurting on those beautiful good chairs,  
15 so I really don't envy the job that you have. (Speaking in  
16 Native language). Thank you everyone.

17 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Thank you, Sarah.  
18 So this is going to be the final remarks of the Commission,  
19 and we're going to do some -- we're going to sing you some  
20 songs in a few moments, but -- and we have a few words to  
21 share.

22 I was just speaking with Chief Commissioner  
23 Buller about, just like what Sarah said, what if there are  
24 people out there that want to make a submission? I would  
25 just advise that you can either call Carolyn or you can

1 navigate the website, murdered and missing website. And if  
2 you're a program person from a department in any of our  
3 cities or any of our communities in Canada and you feel the  
4 need to send in a letter or your report or such, or  
5 comments that you have, you're more than welcome to submit  
6 them electronically online.

7 So thank you again to anyone who is  
8 watching, and that's an extension of an invite for all of  
9 you all to have your voices heard.

10 We're going to first off introduce for the  
11 final time here Chief Commissioner Buller. Give her a big  
12 round of applause.

13 **(APPLAUSE)**

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you  
15 very much, Eric. Thank you. One of the biggest challenges  
16 I face is getting to the lectern without tripping.

17 First I want to recognize and thank the  
18 people of Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation in Region 3 here  
19 who have hosted us so warmly and so graciously this week.

20 I would also like to thank Norton, also  
21 known as Spike Eagle Speaker, and Alvine Wolfleg Eagle  
22 Speaker, you've been wonderful to have. Gerald Meguinis,  
23 John Wesley, Edmee Comstock, and of course our very  
24 talented Jason Goodstriker.

25 Thank you also to the drummers, the

1 Blackfoot drummers for welcoming us and making all of us  
2 dance. Thank you. It's hard to stay in your seat when  
3 they're performing.

4 I also want to thank our Elders who travel  
5 with us, our grandmothers who keep us pointed in the right  
6 direction, pick us up, dust us off and set us out again  
7 when we need that, and it happens from time to time.

8 Thank you also to the traditional knowledge  
9 keepers and our NFAC, National Family Advisory Circle,  
10 members who were here all week well. Again, they keep us  
11 pointed in the right direction and we're grateful for their  
12 guidance as well.

13 To the honoured witnesses, to those of you  
14 who shared your knowledge and expertise with us, I want to  
15 thank you too for helping us to understand your work  
16 better. And I want to thank the parties with standing who  
17 were here this week, thank you for your thoughtful  
18 questions. They are so very important to the truth  
19 gathering part of our work.

20 I also, of course, want to thank the most  
21 amazing translators at the back of the room who we very  
22 rarely see, but upon whom we rely.

23 And last but certainly not least, the most  
24 amazing National Inquiry staff who work tirelessly because  
25 of their love of their work and their love of our people.

1           I found it very helpful this week to  
2 understand a little bit more about how government services  
3 work, whether it was victim services, health services,  
4 family violence prevention, addictions, mental health  
5 services. All of the witnesses described their special  
6 service delivery challenges, especially in the north and  
7 remote areas. That was very important to our work.

8           We also heard about the frontline workers,  
9 those who, based in culture and tradition, work tirelessly  
10 daily, often in unsafe conditions to strengthen, support  
11 and empower now generations of Indigenous women and girls.

12           They work hard every day. They work in  
13 circumstances that would try the most patient of us. I am  
14 grateful that all Canadians had the opportunity to hear  
15 this week about how hard the frontline workers work every  
16 day and how they're pressed for resources to do their work.

17           Knowledge brings understanding, which brings  
18 compassion. We're learning that this is a challenge for  
19 all Canadians.

20           We've also been able to connect the dots a  
21 bit more about how we've heard in the past from families  
22 and survivors and the difficulties they've had in accessing  
23 programs and services across Canada. Now, we've been able  
24 to connect some of those dots to the service, and the  
25 service providers. We have a -- a wealth of knowledge and

1 information now. That we have to take time to carefully  
2 analyze and reflect upon. I'm grateful to everyone who's  
3 participated this week.

4 Personally, this week has highlighted and  
5 reinforced how ending violence against our women and girls  
6 is a responsibility shared by all Canadians. It's important  
7 that we continue to build partnerships with each other  
8 because that's where the strength is. Unfortunately,  
9 though, we were -- we're reminded again this week, and took  
10 time to honour that we recently lost more loved ones. It is  
11 difficult, truly difficult to hear about these tragic events  
12 as we work across Canada because we hear about these losses  
13 far too often.

14 The lives of Indigenous women and girls  
15 depend on the work that we do. And we're aiming for, of  
16 course, recommendations that will work to end the violence.  
17 And as one of our witnesses today said so perfectly, to end  
18 the war against Indigenous women and girls. We have to work  
19 together to stand up for our mothers, daughters, nieces,  
20 cousins, aunties, those who are no longer with us. And  
21 those who can't join us. Those who are able to join us too.  
22 We must remain strong and united because the lives of our  
23 sisters, and mothers, and cousins, and daughters, grandmas,  
24 all depend on it. And the urgency is palpable.

25 I'll close by saying, we'll meet again in a



1 few weeks in Toronto for our next hearing on racism. I  
2 expect it will be as moving, and as thought provoking as  
3 this week. Thank you all again. And I look forward to  
4 meeting you in a few weeks in Toronto. Safe trips home to  
5 everyone. Thank you.

6 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you.

7 **(APPLAUSE)**

8 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** We're going to invite  
9 Commissioner Robert [sic] -- Robinson to come and to have  
10 some closing remarks. And I'd like to thank and -- we move  
11 forward.

12 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** First, I'd like  
13 to say thank you, (Speaking in Native language), to the  
14 wonderful welcoming we've had from the Blackfoot Nation,  
15 from the Treaty 7 Nations, as well as the Métis Nation in  
16 Region 3. I'd like to thank the Elders who've guided us  
17 every day, started us with ceremony, with prayer every day.  
18 I'd like to thank the Elders and grandmothers who travel  
19 with us and guide us and set us straight every day. I'd  
20 also very much like to thank you, Jason, for -- for the  
21 laughs. Yeah. The drummers for the songs, and -- and that  
22 medicine as well.

23 I want to acknowledge the families and  
24 survivors who have come to bear witness as well. This is  
25 your space. I want to acknowledge and thank the National

1 Family Advisory Circle members that are here with us,  
2 Bonnie, Cynthia, Sarah, Charlotte, and Melanie. And we've  
3 also had Myrna was here with us as well.

4 I'd like to thank the witnesses. The women  
5 and men who have come and shared with us, and answered hard  
6 questions, and talked about tough truths. And did so in an  
7 honest way, and in a good way. And -- and I really want to  
8 express my gratitude for that. And I asked at the beginning  
9 of the week, to -- to -- for the witnesses to give  
10 themselves to this. And I think that they rose to this.  
11 And I thank them for that.

12 Parties with standing, I'd like you to -- I'd  
13 like to appreciate your -- your time here, your questions.  
14 Also, for sitting in the seats for so long,  
15 and -- and working together, and asking questions, thought-  
16 provoking questions that have us all thinking about how we  
17 move forward.

18 We've learnt so much this week. So much.  
19 And I acknowledge what Charlotte has raised. Let's be  
20 frank, it's the tip of the iceberg. But we learnt about the  
21 challenges of the availability, accessibility, and the  
22 appropriateness of Victim Services, health and wellness  
23 services, and safe space and shelter access. We heard that  
24 the needs are so high, but they're not being met. Even with  
25 the amazing efforts of the grassroots and the community-

1 based groups we've been hearing from. We've heard that  
2 there is a tremendous disconnect between government funders,  
3 and community-based service providers in the women, girls,  
4 trans, and two-spirited, that these programs and policies  
5 are -- are designed to serve.

6 We've heard what the solutions are as well,  
7 and we can't brush over that. A wrap-around, community-  
8 based support that meets all the needs, rooted in culture,  
9 relationship, and that recognizes the inherent strength of  
10 the women, not as victims, but as strong, capable, rights-  
11 holding, worthy humans. We've heard that in this effort,  
12 there's challenges. This is the approach that grassroots  
13 and community-based organizations are trying to provide.  
14 They recognize that women and girls aren't, "This is where  
15 my health is going to be addressed. This is where my mental  
16 wellness is going to be addressed. This is where my  
17 spiritual health will be addressed. And this is where my  
18 shelter's going to be addressed." They are whole beings,  
19 that need holistic help and support.

20 But at times, government priorities,  
21 policies, mandates, and programs don't see it this way. And  
22 this is a big problem in the disconnect. Existing pockets  
23 that don't fit the needs, limited opportunities for those  
24 experts, community-based groups as well as those with lived  
25 experience have an opportunity to help inform the design and

1 the priorities and the policies of these programs. That  
2 partnership and relationship needs to happen more. We heard  
3 some examples, but we heard what the challenges are when it  
4 doesn't happen. Lack of data, lack of information, lack of  
5 evaluating effectiveness. You know, what's needed. But you  
6 don't know how what you're doing is meeting that need.

7 We've heard about two very -- three very  
8 concerning realities. A lack of political and institutional  
9 will, discrimination, and racism. And I look forward to the  
10 conversations we'll have in two weeks in Toronto, where we  
11 will talk about racism. Because until those ideologies of  
12 supremacy are rejected, change can't happen fast enough.

13 I'd like to thank all those that have come  
14 forward. What we've learnt this week is going to help. Not  
15 only create safer communities, but the goal is not just to  
16 stop the violence. It's for -- to allow Indigenous women  
17 and girls, trans and two-spirited, to reclaim their space,  
18 their place and their power. (Speaking in Native language).  
19 Thank you all for being here with us this week. And I look  
20 forward to us returning in a couple weeks. Safe travels.

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You too.

22 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you,  
23 Commissioner Robinson, who have beautiful moccasins by the  
24 way, so. All right. I'm going to call forward again for  
25 the final time on the week, Commissioner Eyolfson. If you



1 Indigenous women, girls and trans and two-spirit people  
2 through their very thoughtful strengths this week.

3 I found it very valuable to hear about many  
4 of the things we heard this week, such as the delivery of  
5 victim services, and health services. Particularly, some of  
6 the challenges -- challenges and gaps in those services.  
7 Some of those that occur in the northern communities in  
8 particular. Also, the importance of providing services for  
9 our exploited youth in a way that's informed by lived  
10 experience. And also, the resource challenges of shelter  
11 services that we heard are so crucial to our Indigenous  
12 women and girls.

13 And I just also want to take this time to say  
14 this week I was also reminded of the role that men have to  
15 play in ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.  
16 As men, we need to come together to find ways of ending  
17 violence that our Indigenous women and girls, and trans and  
18 two-spirited people face. And we need to talk to other men  
19 about these issues. Ensure that men are held accountable.  
20 And we need to work together to end violence.

21 So what we learned this week has built on  
22 what we heard through the community hearings, and the  
23 statement gathering events. And it's also been a compliment  
24 to what we heard in our expert hearing. And I look forward  
25 to seeing many of you at our -- our next expert hearing on

1 racism in Toronto in a couple of weeks. And I just want to  
2 end by saying thank you to everybody. *Chi-miigwech*, and I  
3 wish you all safe travels home to your family. Thank you.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you,  
6 Commissioner. Oh, my friend, my sister, gee, you know,  
7 Commissioner Audette and I, even though I'm 45, we've known  
8 each other since we were -- oh, over 60 years I would say.  
9 So give her a big round of applause. Thank you again,  
10 Commissioner Audette.

11 (APPLAUSE)

12 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Did you say  
13 that we were liars when we started? We are not, you are.

14 (LAUGHTER)

15 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, I want  
16 to say (speaking Native language). I see, and I heard, and  
17 I join my heart and my voice to my colleagues, to  
18 Commissioner who said thank you to all of you here. And the  
19 families, I want to add from -- from the bottom of my heart,  
20 I see there is family members in this room that spent the  
21 week and listen. Or spoke to us, shared their concern.  
22 Their tears are -- was afraid that we failed -- failed them  
23 or failed you.

24 I don't know if I'll be able to solve  
25 everything. I don't think so. But one thing I know, that I

1 am walking beside you, because you're my mentors. You're  
2 the women and the men, and the youth and the Elders that are  
3 telling us, telling me why we need to do this. I don't have  
4 to be here like you, you don't have to be here. We should  
5 be dancing, celebrating, but because we lost a loved one, or  
6 because we're a survivor, or because we're continue what our  
7 ancestor asked for many decades to find the truth, because  
8 we know that truth, but to share that truth to Canada. And  
9 make sure with that truth, that Canada, Alberta, and the  
10 rest of Canada, provinces and territory, would honor that  
11 truth.

12 And I'm going to fight for that. Sometimes  
13 I'll cry, sometimes I'll speak loud. Sometimes I'll be  
14 quiet, but I'm going to fight for this justice. For my five  
15 children, and my granddaughter, but also for the friends  
16 that I met over the years. Some that I reconnected here,  
17 some that I met here. And I know we're 75, maybe 80 of us  
18 on this amazing, tough journey; this National Inquiry. But  
19 it's nothing compare when you lost -- when you lose a loved  
20 one.

21 So we have to make sure we do not fail you.  
22 And if we do, I apologize. But after, I'll become Free  
23 Moccasin, I will continue that's -- that journey with you.  
24 It is something very different compared to the hearings that  
25 we had with families and survivors, but still inside, deep



1       inside, we had panel that came from communities, came from  
2       organization, from grass root organization, that demonstrate  
3       the difference or the gap between the mission statement or  
4       between the objective of this services or this institution,  
5       this government.

6                       They came here to show us and show Canada  
7       that what's written there on the website, it's not the  
8       reality on the ground. That we're still in the survivor  
9       mode. That we're still fighting among ourself [sic],  
10      because there's not enough. So of course, in this report,  
11      the voices that we've heard today and yesterday, and weeks  
12      ago will be very important in this work. Very, very  
13      important.

14                      We receive truth this week and we'll receive  
15      again next week. There was an important debate also this  
16      week; how should we share that truth? Believe us, we want  
17      to receive the truth from every government. From every  
18      organization, but we have to do it well. And I will fight  
19      to make sure we do it well, but many of us will -- will do  
20      it. So I'm very confident.

21                      We've heard a lot about finance, the budget,  
22      money. And I understand that there is a big gap on how the  
23      mission statement will provide the funding to the  
24      organization. And when a family is turned down because  
25      there's no room in the shelter, and couple days later we --

1 we found out they're dead because they weren't safe. They  
2 weren't protected. So there again, we receive so many  
3 proof, so many proof from the strength of the family across  
4 Canada.

5 And I want to say to Canada, very sincere,  
6 very open heart, very open mind, that there is still 500  
7 family members and survivors that took the courage to  
8 register to this -- to here, and to come and share their  
9 truth. How can we honour that? The staff is exhausted.  
10 The Commissioner, not yet, but soon. But how can we make  
11 sure that we are healthy to receive that truth when we still  
12 don't know if we do have or not an extension? Just tell us.  
13 Just tell us how many months, how much we will receive. Not  
14 for us, but for this mandate. The mandate you -- you gave  
15 us. From that after, you'll see if I agree or not. I'm  
16 asking you, give us an answer. Family deserve an answer.  
17 Survivors deserve an answer. Our Elders, in fact, all of  
18 us, people in this room deserve an answer.

19 You have a good example this week that  
20 different government across Canada, from provinces wanted to  
21 share their truth, their document, but because of lack of  
22 timing we had to say a kind of no, which I think it's not  
23 fair. So everybody deserves a time here in answer to our  
24 question, tough question, but deserve also to explain why.

25 In conclusion, I'll say again to the

1 families that I met this week, I don't know if we will  
2 cross our path again, but social media is there, if you  
3 have a concern, if you have a beautiful word to share to  
4 us, or a tear, I'm not far. I'm not far.

5 Again, thank you, because of you, the love  
6 of the Elders, the song, the ceremonies, the willingness of  
7 what you are sharing to us, this is why I wake up every  
8 day. This is why I'm stubborn, and I am your ally. I am  
9 not perfect, but fudge, I'm dedicated. Thank you.

10 **(APPLAUSE)**

11 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you. We just  
12 are very happy to hear your words, and I always look  
13 forward to your -- you're very well thought out and you're  
14 very methodological. I've never met -- I very rarely met  
15 leaders that take the time to put in that amount of effort  
16 in what you say and how you lead.

17 I was asked to say two things. I just  
18 wanted to -- I will keep it short. And in our ways we say  
19 (Speaking in Native language). So years ago I was made an  
20 announcer, so I'm asked to say things privately and to  
21 bring things forward, and that's kind of been my job for a  
22 long time.

23 My dad was a -- like I mentioned, was a  
24 20-year member of the National Parole Board, and one of the  
25 things that he said on all of the people that were on the

1       inside, men and women, he said one thing that I noticed in  
2       the interviews was that many of them didn't have Indian  
3       names, and so he said whenever you have access to a crowd,  
4       whether you're at a powwow or something, encourage people  
5       to give their children Indian names. And that's a little  
6       bit of homework.

7                   And he said because when you name a spirit,  
8       it will help you and it will continue on in their lives.  
9       And it's very few tools we have for our children when  
10      giving them ways of protection as they go forward in their  
11      challenges, so I would just extend that to you from my  
12      father, to -- no matter what colour you are, because we're  
13      all children of Earth, and you can seek out Elders' help or  
14      people of experience and get them Indian names if they  
15      don't have any just yet. That was one thing.

16                   Last night when Elder Blu and I were having  
17      a discussion, a midnight smoke of course, we were talking  
18      about a lot of things, and she gave me a real powerful  
19      teaching. And we all have -- every family has people in  
20      it, what the outside society calls it is LGB -- and  
21      a -- and a whole -- it's just -- it's the English alphabet.  
22      We say (speaking in Native language) that's our people,  
23      they're neither men, neither women, but they're people.

24                   And I can honestly say that I've seen some  
25      statistics from family members of mine who are this way,

1 and I was very astounded to hear about the numbers of, you  
2 know, suicide attempts, arrests, dealing with addictions  
3 and going beyond, the bullying that happens when they're  
4 young and in school. And this is something that's going to  
5 be perhaps the next steps of where we're going, and as  
6 we -- as we unwrap the issues through the -- through the  
7 Inquiry.

8 But what Blu told me was that -- it was a  
9 special teaching, and it was, you know, the residential  
10 school agreement that we all were a part of when we came to  
11 be, one of the things in the school's lasting legacies that  
12 unfortunately lived in our communities, that we were  
13 ashamed of the people like that. We were made to feel  
14 ashamed of the people, and so it all went into a deep dark  
15 place for a lot of years.

16 And now what Blu has told me last night, was  
17 one of the things that was so special was that it was  
18 foretold in a profit -- in a prophecy from some years back,  
19 that the children are going to be the ones that will  
20 strengthen the identity again and make us all proud and  
21 again family members.

22 Now we see it. Now it's come forward. So  
23 she asked me to mention that, and that was something that's  
24 very valuable, and the days of shame are in the past. Like  
25 my friend, Emery (ph), would say, The past is the past,

1 so -- but this is something that I was asked to say.

2 I'm going to ask Sarah to come forward and  
3 to help us with the -- oh, Charlotte. Oh, I'm sorry,  
4 Charlotte is going to help us with the Quiliq, and the  
5 Elders, I'd like to ask if Spike and Alvine would help us  
6 out, and all of our friends here -- oh, Gerald is here as  
7 well, Meguinis, from Tsuut'ina, and Edmee Comstock from the  
8 Métis Nation to come and say some words of prayer.

9 Now, we're just at the tail end, we're going  
10 to all get out of -- get going here in a few moment, but  
11 one of the special things about being Blackfoot, and most  
12 any of you have this in your cultures, that we protect  
13 ourselves on our travel, so these are going to be prayers  
14 for yourselves and your family, but one thing I'm going to  
15 ask the Elders that you consider when you say your prayers  
16 and when we take down the lamp, is that we -- we pray that  
17 this is going to go somewhere with the Federal Government,  
18 and we pray that this isn't going to be a Royal Commission  
19 stuffed on a shelf, that this isn't going to be a Kelowna  
20 Accord that got dropped off the earth, that this is  
21 actually going to happen, and we're going to need to do  
22 something about that.

23 (APPLAUSE)

24 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: So I'm going ask  
25 the Elders to use that in your prayers and ask for that,

1 that we have a continuance. (Speaking in Native language)

2 **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** Excuse me. If I  
3 can have a minute, if you want to put the timer on.

4 **(LAUGHTER)**

5 **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** You know what, as  
6 Elders we just sit and sit and sit, but, you know what,  
7 we -- we do like to come up and say something, we do. And  
8 this is the reason why I'm here. Nobody elected me to be  
9 here, I just figured I'm going to do it.

10 I want to thank the people that asked my  
11 husband and I to be the Elders within this room within this  
12 week. It was a pleasure.

13 I would also like to thank the Elders of  
14 this region for helping us out. Without the Elders'  
15 prayers and without their knowledge, wisdom, my father used  
16 to say, nothing will go.

17 Without the Elders that we have gone to  
18 school, like all of you. You have big degrees, you have  
19 bachelors, masters, doctors, and some of you might have  
20 triple doctors, but we too go to school. And we -- we  
21 learn to be who we are and to do the best job we can do.

22 Everything that has happened here, I too  
23 suffered on the streets of Calgary with my children, a  
24 little boy that was 2 years old, a baby in my arms and two  
25 little girls, I was refused to have lodge. It's supposed

1 to be a safe house, it's supposed to be safe for me. I  
2 remember the dumpsters today where I slept with my  
3 children.

4 I know how it is to be down and out. To  
5 have a life with my husband, it was all because of Elders'  
6 prayers, it was all because of their hard work to make my  
7 husband a better man. Without the teachings of our Elders  
8 we won't be where we are today. I don't know where I would  
9 have been, or my children. The wisdom that we've learned,  
10 and the knowledge, and above all, the love that was taught  
11 to us through our smudge. The first time you -- you burn  
12 your smudge, that first smoke, teaches us that that's love.  
13 Love for anybody. It doesn't matter who it is.

14 Today, I walk proud. Today, I learn to love  
15 a lot stronger than I did before, because I blamed everybody  
16 for what was happening to me. Today, you young people have  
17 a lot of backup. I wanted to say something yesterday and a  
18 person here asked me, "You should go up there and say  
19 something." As Elders, we don't like to just step in and  
20 say, hey, what, let me say something here. There's a lot of  
21 young people that overstep us as Elders. We don't use  
22 Elders and just put them on a shelf, why -- every once in a  
23 while, dust them off. You utilize the Elders with your  
24 mind, body, and spirit. That's how you use the -- you don't  
25 use them or abuse them. But a lot of communities do that.





1       figured it out, and all it meant was, you've got to fight.  
2       Don't give up. That's all they told me. Fight together.  
3       Like the holders of Canada. This is our land, let's fight  
4       together rather than fighting each.

5                       I want to thank -- and I could never get her  
6       name. Where's that lady that was going to put me in her bag  
7       and take me home? I might need a ride to Toronto, so maybe  
8       I'll -- I might take that offer and jump into her suitcase.

9                                       **(LAUGHTER)**

10                   **MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER:** There you are.  
11       But my husband and I have talked, we've cried in our room,  
12       we're silent, but we've prayed hard. These are not the  
13       cries of -- of being unhappy. We cry because we're -- we're  
14       not sad, we're happy. We do cry when we're happy, too, and  
15       that's where we are. My husband and I are 48 years, a lot  
16       of years for us to be together, but we made it with the help  
17       of the people that open their doors to us. Sometimes  
18       there's basements, walking up and down the streets of  
19       Calgary to find rent. Our children are running by us. We  
20       buy bologna, bread, one little hop, we tell our children  
21       we're going to have a picnic. We let them sleep and we're  
22       on our way.

23                       Those are some of the experiences that make  
24       us strong today. And that's why you have to be strong. I  
25       love all of you, and in my Blackfoot language, when -- we

1 don't have a word for "goodbye." We just say  
2 *kitaakotamattsinoo*. "I'll see you later." So I -- I think I  
3 took more than one minute. Sorry about that.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 MS. ALVINE EAGLE SPEAKER, MR. SPIKE EAGLE  
6 SPEAKER, MR. GERALD MEGUINIS, AND MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK:

7 (Speaking in Native language).

8 --- CLOSING PRAYER

9 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: Hey. Thank you.

10 MS. EDMEE COMSTOCK: (Speaking in Native  
11 language) and thank you, everyone, in English. I will say  
12 it, and I did ask for the government to come through with  
13 the money and to bless each and every one. Commission, the  
14 panel, any. And my Elders that I learned so much from them  
15 as well. (Speaking in Native language).

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER: (Speaking in Native  
18 language) -- anyways, my late grandfather, his name was  
19 Pinakwiam (ph), he -- he was a holy man, and I was two weeks  
20 old when he gave me my first song, and it was a travelling  
21 song. Anyways, he had a dream, and it came about when he  
22 rode amongst an enemy in his dream, and he rode a sorrel  
23 horse. And he used the song over the years, and it was  
24 gifted to me with my first Indian name. Anyways, one time  
25 he was flying down to Los Angeles and they ran into



1 many of them are passed on now, I'm not too sure how many  
2 of -- are still around, but we -- amongst our Blackfoot  
3 bands we have a name for each of our clubs, and this one  
4 was called A-1 Club. These two songs that you're going to  
5 hear are well over 50, 100, whatever  
6 -- however old they are, but the first one is the flag song  
7 and it's the song that we sing for our warriors, our  
8 veterans. We're just going to sing a couple starts, and  
9 then our last song is a very special one. So you don't  
10 have to stand, you could kind of visit around if you like.

11 **(SINGING)**

12 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Thank you. It's  
13 hard to -- it was hard, for a moment there, to talk to tell  
14 you this last one. A-1 Club was a special group for a  
15 number of reasons, and it was intended on restoring our  
16 pride. And, anyways, the women of the Anglican charge was  
17 gifted this song by A-1 Club. This was gifted to them some  
18 20 -- well, 30, 40 years ago, and this is the women's song.  
19 And this is our final song that we're going to sing for all  
20 you here, and it's a special one. It was his grandson who  
21 made this song. (Speaking in Native Language).

22 **--- CLOSING SONG**

23 **MR. JASON GOODSTRIKER:** Okay. Thank you.  
24 We -- have the best singers in the world here, so anyways,  
25 don't forget to call your spirits with you as you leave, so

1       you don't want to leave your spirit in downtown Calgary,  
2       there's a lot of crazy things happen around here at  
3       nighttime. Anyways, thank you again. I just wanted to  
4       also say that that song is our moving camp song, so when we  
5       move to the next camp we call for prayers and we pack up --  
6       roll up the teepee and we move on. So good luck in  
7       Toronto, and good luck in the conclusion of the commission.  
8       And thank you again to the organizers and all of you all.  
9       We love you all. Come back again to Calgary. Aho!  
10      --- Upon adjourning at 6:00 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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I, Krystle Palynchuk, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.



Krystle Palynchuk

June 1, 2018