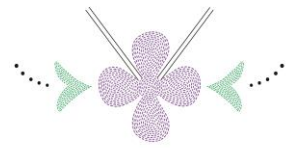


Changes at the National Inquiry:

A Personal Note from Marion Buller, Chief Commissioner of MMIWG-FFADA



Saturday, October 7, 2017

To: Survivors, families, communities, staff of the National Inquiry, National Indigenous Organizations and all those who are dedicated to our shared mission;

I begin this letter by upholding the Spirits of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBTQ2S people, including those who have died in mysterious or violent circumstances, or by suicide. This National Inquiry will do all that it can to honour all of their beautiful Spirits.

I have promised all of you that I will keep you abreast of events and circumstances that occur in the course of the National Inquiry's work. Today, I am sharing with you some key personnel changes that have just taken place.

We are disappointed to learn that Aimeé Craft, the Director of Research has decided to return to her position in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, effective November 1, 2017. I am joined by my fellow Commissioners: Michele Audette, Qajaq Robinson and Brian Eyolfson in expressing our appreciation for her hard work and dedication to the vision that we all share.

The role of research in the work of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls remains critically important to our mandate. The research and work plans of the Research Team, led by Aimée Craft, will continue to guide the work of the National Inquiry as we deliver on the mandate to investigate all forms of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people across Canada.

We will continue to benefit from the excellent contributions the Research Team has produced so far--including laying the foundation of the Interim Report, which will be released on schedule, November 1, 2017. Our commitment to meet our research priorities and the mandate of the National Inquiry is strong and we are determined to do the absolute best job that we possibly can.

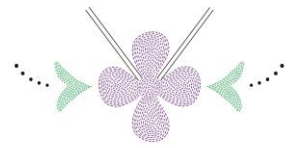
Another change that has taken place is that Susan Vella, Lead Commission Counsel, has left the Commission--effective immediately and we wish her well in her future endeavours. The legal team will build upon the contributions made by Susan during her time with us. Some of those accomplishments include:

- Collecting and examining police files and databases from federal, provincial, regional, and local forces
- Creation of a national Statement Gatherers team – an approach that is unique to this National Inquiry
- Developing the Legal Paths document on respectful practices
- Establishing a legal party engagement strategy

Under Susan's Lead, the National Inquiry hired or retained ten of the most qualified lawyers—all of whom have the strength to carry on our mandate. Their combined expertise enables us to push the boundaries and scope of our Terms of Reference. We remain confident in the current legal team and believe they can carry on the work until a decision is made about Susan's replacement.

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The Appointment of Debbie Reid as Executive Director

This brings me next, to the positive piece of news about the appointment of Debbie Reid as our new Executive Director. All of the Commissioners join me in welcoming Debbie to the Inquiry and thanking Aileen Nabigon, our Interim Executive Director who has done such a great job for us throughout this recent period, as we conducted a competitive search for this important position. We posted the announcement on our website, Facebook and Twitter yesterday.

With Debbie having just begun her work, the Commissioners are working with her to see what changes to the organizational structure – including the research and legal functions – could help us to streamline the work of the Inquiry as we remain focused on delivering on our promises to survivors, families and our communities.

We are determined to keep moving forward in a good way- for the 750 and counting- families and survivors who want to participate in the National Inquiry. Considering that registration is done entirely on a voluntary basis, we understand the magnitude of the level of interest in First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities. That is why our frontline and outreach workers continue to encourage all families and survivors to share their truths.

The Commissioners and current staff remain committed to meeting all of the mandate's obligations and more. We are bound together through the powerful testimonies of family members and survivors who have already shared their stories with us in Smithers BC last week and in Whitehorse, YK this past spring.

We are working hard, finalizing plans for the third Community Hearings in Winnipeg on October 16-20, 2017. We continue to be adaptable and look forward to hearing from more families and survivors during the remaining seven that we have scheduled through to December.

There will be more Community Hearings and Expert Panel Hearings in 2018, in addition to Institutional Hearings. We are listening to your suggestions, and once our schedule is finalized, we will inform you right away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Marion Buller

Chief Commissioner
MMIWG-FFADA