



Ref. 46418

February 8, 2019

Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
Office of the Chief Coroner
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9259 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9J4

Dear Lisa Lapointe:

Thank you for your November 13, 2018, letter regarding the Verdict of Inquest concerning the death of Deanna Renee Desjarlais, which occurred in Surrey, British Columbia (B.C.) on April 20, 2016. Thank you for bringing Recommendation #9 to the attention of the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) and other ministries for response.

Recommendation 9: Increase culturally appropriate support services for Indigenous women and provide training for community supports and corrections staff on available Indigenous supports within the community.

The Province of B.C. has committed to fully adopting and implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. Through government-wide mandate letters, all ministers have been directed to move forward on the TRC Calls to Action, which include specific calls for access to, and training, to support culturally appropriate programs and services for Indigenous peoples.

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Ministry of
Indigenous Relations
and Reconciliation

Office of the
Minister

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Also, on May 22, 2018, the Province released the *Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* (the Draft Principles) to the BC Public Service. The Draft Principles are a tool to guide Ministries and Crown corporations to meet mandate letter requirements. Each Ministry has been appointed a "Champion" who is accountable for operationalizing the Draft Principles within their Ministry.

Since February 2018, Esquimalt-Metchosin MLA Mitzi Dean has served as Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity. Mitzi Dean serves under the direction of Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance. Her responsibilities include ensuring gender equity is reflected in government budgets, policies, and programs; co-ordinating cross-government action on gender issues, including gender violence, gender equality and women's economic empowerment; and tracking progress on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

While the specific services and training described within Recommendation #9 do not fall within MIRR's scope and mandate, MIRR continues to work closely with other ministries and agencies as well as Indigenous partners to support the development of a number of cross-government initiatives. These initiatives seek to advance reconciliation by improving services and supports and to work towards improved social and economic outcomes for Indigenous peoples in B.C.

I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Jury, and to the presiding Coroner, who have presented these thoughtful and important recommendations to government. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Fraser', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott Fraser
Minister

pc: Mitzi Dean
Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity
Esquimalt-Metchosin MLA