



# **YUKON ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES**

**YACWI ANNUAL REPORT | 2016-2017**

# CHAIR'S MESSAGE



## **This is my last message as Chair of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues.**

It has been a great honour to serve as the Chair of YACWI and to be surrounded by some of Yukon's wisest women. I hold my hands up to the women serving on the Council currently and to those who have contributed with years of service such as Ann Maje Raider and Kluane Adamek. I am humbled by their wisdom and hope I have learned much from their teachings.

2016/2017 saw a significant change in the leadership with the Territorial election and appointment of Jeanie Dendys as the Minister responsible for Women's Directorate. Having worked with Jeanie in previous employment I was elated to see her appointed to this very important role.

YACWI's first order of business was to meet with Minister Dendys and then facilitate meetings between the women's organizations across Yukon and the Minister. The intent was to bring as many participants as possible to a round table discussion of each organizations services and to see where there might be opportunities for collaboration and information sharing to better assist all our clients. This allowed us to share useful and timely information between organizations, and to make new connections.

We also heard directly from Minister Dendys on her vision for the Women's Directorate moving forward.

Minister Dendys has set an ambitious agenda to raise the profile of the Women's Directorate and YACWI is committed to advise and assist the minister in facilitating the important discussions that need to happen in order to help drive forward the work of this important department.

I wish Minister Dendys, YACWI and all organizations affected by these changes wholesome, authentic communications that results in improvements in advancing the rights of Yukoners.

**KIM SOLONICK – YACWI CHAIR**

# MEETINGS



The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues (YACWI) held three meetings and one forum during the 2016-17 fiscal year. At each meeting, information items were brought to the Council's attention and the Director of the Women's Directorate provided updates on Directorate activities. In addition, a standing agenda item encouraged round table discussions about the most recent activities and/or concerns of Yukon women and equality seeking organizations. This year's forum brought together community partners, YACWI and Women's Directorate staff to discuss the role of the Women's Directorate and to introduce the new Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, Jeanie Dendys. The outgoing Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, Elaine Taylor attended the first two YACWI meetings of the 2016/17 fiscal year.

# MEETINGS



## APRIL 22ND AND 23RD, 2016 IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON

The first YACWI meeting of the 2016/17 fiscal year began with a roundtable for members to provide updates on their communities. Council members attended a variety of events, which they discussed with the Council, on topics including Women in Politics and Common Law vs Marriage and how this distinction is important for Yukon women.

The second day of meetings were attended by Minister Taylor and Jennifer England, Director of the Women's Directorate. The meeting began with a discussion of activities and initiatives at the Women's Directorate including the Yukon Regional Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (YRRT) which took place on Feb. 12, 2016 and attendance by a Yukon delegation at the second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Winnipeg on February 24-26, 2016.

A presentation from Colleen Segriff of the Yukon Literacy Coalition also took place on the second day of meetings. The Yukon Literacy Coalition in partnership with Katherine Alexander at the Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon has received funding from Status of Women Canada for their 2-year project Changing Systems: Women Learning and Violence. Jenny Horsman, author of *Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence, and Education* will be assisting them with this project.

The meeting wrapped with YACWI discussing plans to host their annual forum in January 2017, with discussions of the themes of Diversity and Resilience of Women, Celebrating and Understanding Culture, Culture for Healing, and Creating Cultural Safety for Women.

## SEPTEMBER 16TH AND 17TH, 2016 IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON

The second YACWI meeting of the 2016/17 began by welcoming new board member Crystal Stewart. The council then moved on to community updates including discussions about cultural safety and multiculturalism in Yukon, health supports and daycare in Ross River, and work with the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society in Watson Lake.

On Friday, Norma Davignon, Acting Director for the Women's Directorate provided an update on the activities of the department including, the Violence Prevention Initiative, an internal government project to provide employees support when they are facing violence at home, and the addition of new Sound Stories to [yukongenderequality.com](http://yukongenderequality.com), in order to be more inclusive of those not represented in the gender binary.

The second day of meetings began by welcoming guests Dennis Shorty, Chase Blodgett, Ann Maje Raider, and Yanory Centano. The guests lead discussions on the topic of cultural safety, including goals that they would like to see achieved in seeking cultural safety, such as barrier-free full social inclusion and awareness about other cultures, long-term funding and improved mental health supports. The guests also presented on ways they would like to see these goals achieved with ideas including education in schools, society, churches and other areas, money for cultural supports and updates to legislation.

The remainder of this meeting was dedicated to preparations for the Annual YACWI Forum, with confirmation of the theme Promoting Cultural Awareness and Safety.

# MEETINGS



## JANUARY 13TH AND 14TH, 2017 IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON

This was YACWI's last regular meeting of the 2016/17 fiscal year, which was attended by several members of the Women's Directorate staff and the newly elected Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, Jeanie Dendys, on Saturday.

Meetings began on Friday evening with updates from the Women's Directorate and discussion of the newly released Mandate letters. The mandate for the Women's Directorate includes a call to "build safer communities by increasing government's efforts to reduce violence against women." The mandate also directs the Minister to "work with your colleagues and community partners to ensure Yukon plays an effective role in the inquiry including developing responses that improve community safety and address key concerns." Other key priorities include working with your colleagues, First Nations and community groups to:

- Make existing program funding for the prevention of violence against Indigenous women more readily accessible to communities
- Improve services for victims of violence and sexual assault in Yukon, in conjunction with the Ministers of Justice and Health and Social Services
- Work with the Minister of Justice and other colleagues to conduct a review of legislation, policies and practices to ensure the Yukon government meets the rules and social standards for LGBTQ non-discrimination

The remainder of the Friday evening meeting was spent providing community updates from YACWI members.

On Saturday Jeanie Dendys, the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate introduced herself to YACWI and talked to the council about her vision for both the Women's Directorate and the Advisory Council moving forward. Specifically, she intends to find new ways to ensure that YACWI is used to its fullest potential, starting with advice about a mandate and structure change within the Women's Directorate.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the revised plans for the 2016/17 YACWI forum. The one day event at the Kwanlin Dun Potlatch House would centre on the theme of Building a Vision for Equality. YACWI and the Women's Directorate planned to host a gathering of stakeholders and partners who would come together to discuss changes to the Women's Directorate Mandate and the Minister's vision for the work of the department moving forward.

# MEETINGS



## YACWI FORUM, FEBRUARY 10TH, 2017 IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON

YACWI's Annual Women's Forum took place in mid-February with the theme of Building a Vision for Equality. The one-day Forum aimed to meet a different need for 2016/17, with the introduction the new Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate to partners and NGOs and discussion of her vision for the work of the department and how we could work together moving forward.

The day began with an opening ceremony at the fire pit, followed by introductions of Kim Solonick, the YACWI Chair, Minister Dendys, and Lyn Hartley, the meeting facilitator.

For the remainder of the morning, NGO's and partners provided an overview of their organization, their essential services and their hopes for equality seeking work in 2017, followed by a discussion of existing services in the Yukon.

During the second half of the day, the Women's Directorate presented on their work, how it has changed over the past 30 years and the role of Gender Inclusive and Diversity Analysis (GIDA) within government. Minister Dendys' followed with a presentation on her vision of equality as the new Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, which included her hopes and plans for the Women's Directorate. This presentation lead into a discussion about emerging opportunities with forum guests.

The forum concluded with a brief discussion of YACWI's continued role in the equality seeking community followed by a Closing Circle.

The forum was well attended, with 15 organizations represented. Overall the discussion were mixed with varied reactions from stakeholder groups to proposed changes to the Women's Directorate. The meeting wrapped up with the invitation to provide more feedback to the day's discussions via YACWI or the Women's Directorate, and a commitment to further engagement before lasting changes to the Women's Directorate are made.

# ABOUT THE COUNCIL



The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues was established by the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act in May 1992. The Act mandates Council to:

- Develop public awareness of the issues affecting the status of women;
- Promote a change of attitudes within the Yukon so that the women may enjoy equality of opportunity;
- Encourage discussions and expressions of opinion by Yukon residents on issues affecting the status of women;
- Review policies, programs, and legislation affecting women, as directed by the Minister;
- Advise the Minister with respect to such issues as the Minister may refer to the Council for its consideration;
- Advise the Minister with respect to such issues as the Council considers advisable; and
- Encourage organizations and groups that promote the equality of women.

Council business is directed and determined mainly at Council meetings.

The Council is comprised of eight members appointed by the Commissioner. At least 50 per cent of the members are from rural areas and at least 25 per cent are members of Yukon First Nations.

## MEMBERS AS OF JULY 2017

- **Kim Solonick of Whitehorse (Chair)**
- **Karen Keenan of Teslin (vice-chair)**
- **Joyia Chakungal of Whitehorse**
- **Yvonne Clarke of Whitehorse**
- **Sophie Elasoff of Whitehorse**
- **Crystal Stewart of Watson Lake**
- **Jennifer Frohling of Ross River**

Enhance your opportunity for high-level decision making and leadership participation! Opportunities to sit on the Council arise throughout the year. Please contact the Women's Directorate, if you are interested.

### Women's Directorate

Box 2703 (WD-1), Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1A 2C6  
Office location: 1-404 Hanson Street, Whitehorse  
T: 867-667-3030 • F: 867-393-6270  
Toll free 1-800-661-0408 ext. 3030

## YACWI ADMINISTRATION

Travel	\$9,739.56
Honoraria	\$ 5,687.50
Contracts	\$ 375.00
Food	\$ 486.33
Program Materials	\$ 1,230.00
Printing	\$ 1,153.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 18,763.54</b>

## YACWI FORUM

(Meeting with Minister and Women's Groups)

Travel	\$ 3,298.40
Honoraria	\$ 3,625.00
Contracts	\$ 8,269.00
Program Materials	\$ 254.35
Printing	\$ 68.45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$34,162.57</b>

Women's Directorate • 1-404 Hanson St., Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1A 1Y8  
T: 867-667-3030 • F: 867-393-6270 • Toll free 1-800-661-0408 ext. 3030

