

# Event Proposal

**Event Title: MWCI Status Report**

**Representative: Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton**

<b>Date:</b> Nov. 5, 2013 <b>Time:</b> 2:00 p.m.	<b>Media Market:</b> Province-wide
Place des Arts 1120 Brunette Ave. Coquitlam	<b>English Media Spokesperson:</b> Minister Suzanne Anton
	<b>Multicultural Media Spokesperson:</b> n/a

## THE EVENT

### PROACTIVE EVENT OR INVITATION

- Proactive

### EVENT

- Event to announce progress on the MWCI report recommendations, the availability of a new stream of civil forfeiture grants for community-led projects to prevent the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of vulnerable girls and women in B.C., and a multi-phase project that will begin in the coming months to examine how policing is currently structured and funded.
- The “sexual exploitation and human trafficking of vulnerable girls and women” category is the third of three eligible streams that will share \$1 million in CFO funding. The Minister is announcing the first two streams – youth crime prevention and the development of domestic violence units - at the Ministry of Justice Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards on Nov. 1.

### GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FUNDING / PARTNER FUNDING

- Government of B.C. funding: CFO grants funding of \$1 million

### WHO'S ORGANIZING?

- GCPE – JAG and Events

### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE REQUESTED?

- No

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS and THEME:

- The event demonstrates the Province's commitment to the recommendations from the MWCI report and to the protection of vulnerable women.
- During the 2013 Estimates, Minister Anton committed to releasing a MWCI status report in the fall.
- The Children of the Street Society's vision is a world where children and youth are safe from all forms of sexual exploitation. The group's primary prevention tool is education and awareness workshops which have been held in approximately 30 B.C. communities.
- The Children of the Street Society has received CFO funding in 2011, 2012 and 2013. In March of 2013, they received a \$25,000 grant for an art engagement project that focuses on at-risk youth.

### VENUE DESCRIPTION

- An art gallery space in the Place des Arts, located in Coquitlam.

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS / PARTICIPANTS

Speakers:

- Minister Suzanne Anton
- Emcee - Children of the Street Society Executive Director Diane Snowden

In attendance:

- Local MLAs
  - Port Moody-Coquitlam MLA Linda Reimer
  - Other MLAs - TBC

- Children of the Street Society staff members
- Others - TBC

#### **LIST OF VALIDATORS FOR POST-EVENT ROLLOUT**

- Children of the Street Society Executive Director Diane Snowden

#### **MEDIA INVITED?**

- Yes

#### **AUDIENCE SIZE AND DESCRIPTION / TARGET AUDIENCES**

- An audience of about 25 is anticipated at the event.
- External target audiences include s 13 :
  - MWCI stakeholders
    - 
    - 
    - 
    - 
    -
  - Other British Columbians, located province-wide, with an interest in the issue.
  - Media
  - Members of the Legislative Assembly

#### **PREPOSITIONING:**

- On Dec. 17, 2012, the Province pledged to take immediate action on the missing women report following its release. Minister Anton committed to releasing a status report in the fall of 2013.

#### **PROMOTING THE EVENT:**

- All major media plus those in the relevant community will be contacted to maximize attendance.

## **VISUAL MESSAGE(S)**

#### **DESIRED PICTURE (STILL)**

- Minister speaking at a podium, with Children of the Street Society representative by her side in a gallery space in front of an art project done by participants at the Society.

#### **DESIRED PICTURE (VIDEO)**

- Minister being shown the art projects done by youth.

#### **ACTUAL SPEAKING BACKDROP**

- TBC

#### **LENGTH OF SPEECH**

- 4-5 minutes

#### **TO NE**

- Respectful, empathetic, and committed to taking further action.

#### **ATTIRE**

- Semi-formal

## **WRITTEN MESSAGE(S)**

#### **NEWS RELEASE HEADLINE**

- Action continues to support missing, vulnerable women

#### **DESIRED MEDIA HEADLINE**

- Province making progress on MWCI recommendations

#### **DESIRED SOUNDBITE / KEY NEWS RELEASE SOUNDBITE**

- Not only are we committed to creating a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women, but it is my hope that the families of these murdered and missing women – along with all British Columbians – can see that progress is being made.

#### **KEY MESSAGES**

- The tragedy of the cases of women who were murdered or went missing will not be forgotten.
- Our opportunity now is to continue to make changes to help ensure something like this never happens again.
- Responding to the recommendations included in Forsaken –The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry has been a top priority for our government and my ministry.
- In the 11 months since Commissioner Wally Oppal released his report, the B.C. government has taken significant action: work is already underway on one-half of the recommendations directed at us.
- Even with this steady progress, we recognize there is more that can and must be done. That's why we are also announcing civil forfeiture funding for organizations that support vulnerable women as part of \$1 million announced last week - and multi-phase project to explore how policing is structured.

#### **RESEARCH NEEDS**

- Program staff will prepare for web-posting with information about the grants application process.

## **ROLLOUT**

#### **COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS**

Media Advisory  
New Release  
Speech  
Emcee notes  
Q&A

## **MEDIA PLAN**

#### **STRATEGY**

- Maximize coverage (provincial and regional)

#### **PROMOTING THE EVENT**

Media Advisory

- Major B.C. media including ethnic outlets in the lower mainland.

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Social Media Plan

- Tweets: to be provided

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2013JAG0330-001667  
Nov. 5, 2013

Ministry of Justice

### **Action continues to support missing, vulnerable women**

COQUITLAM – To continue taking action and making steady progress towards protecting the safety and security of vulnerable women in B.C., government is making available up to \$1 million in targeted grant funding and committing to examining the structure and funding of policing in the province.

Starting today, projects that prevent the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of vulnerable girls and women will be eligible to apply for the up to \$1 million in civil forfeiture grant funds available this year. Funding will provide communities with assistance to address these issues at a local level, where vulnerable young women can be exploited and trafficked.

In addition, B.C. is also beginning a multi-phase project to examine how policing is currently structured and funded. Beginning in the coming months, the project will engage municipal leaders and police agencies, working to better define federal, provincial and municipal policing responsibilities, including funding. It will lay the groundwork for exploring new service delivery models while retaining local, community-focused policing.

As government moves forward in fulfilling the spirit of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) recommendations, B.C. will be engaging with key stakeholders to seek their advice and expertise. The MWCI report will serve as the blueprint for this overall direction.

These are the latest steps in government's response to the MWCI recommendations, all of which are detailed in a status report also released today. The report shows that since the release of the MWCI report, work has already been completed or is underway on half of the recommendations directed at the Province.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton –**

"We've made significant progress already and we will continue to do so, in order to ensure the tragedies of the women who were murdered or went missing are never forgotten, and to help prevent something like this from ever happening again."

“Specifically, our government has targeted the issue of vulnerable women from many angles and we continue that today by committing up to \$1 million in funding, by committing to look at the structure and funding of policing in our province and by engaging stakeholders for their advice. These actions, along with the status report, are promises our government made, and now promises our government has kept.

“Our progress on the recommendations from the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry has been significant and steady, and we know that more can and will continue to be done as we move forward.”

**Children of the Street Society executive director Diane Sowden –**

“Civil forfeiture funding has helped our organization engage with high-risk youth in the community, some of whom had been victims of sexual exploitation, and allowed us to address the issue directly, at the local level. With this grant in partnership with other funders, Children of the Street Society was able to provide an art project that encourages victims to express their thoughts and emotions creatively as part of their healing process. Projects like these can be a lifeline for young people to express themselves in a positive way who may otherwise be fearful of expressing themselves or doing so in negative ways.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Substantive changes have taken place since the period of time under review by the MWCI, including significant reforms in policing practices, and national, provincial and local-level initiatives to prevent violence against vulnerable women and examine issues related to the investigation and prosecution of cases involving the serial murder of women.
- Government invested \$9.9 million in the MWCI which delivered a six volume, 1,400-page report to government in December 2012 after a two year inquiry that involved 90 days of public hearings.
- The Crime Victim Assistance Program has provided approximately \$1.44 million in compensation to family members of missing women in the Pickton case. Counselling services continue to be available for family members.
- Application process details for the civil forfeiture grants are available at: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/grants>
- The latest round of civil forfeiture grants will be shared by projects that focus on youth crime prevention, the development and enhancement of Domestic Violence Units, and the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of vulnerable girls and women.
- Since B.C.’s civil forfeiture program became active in 2006, it has returned more than \$11 million from successful forfeiture actions to crime prevention programs and to victims of fraud and phony investment schemes. The Civil Forfeiture Act was brought in to suppress unlawful activity and take away the profit motive.
- In March 2013, the Children of the Street Society received a \$25,000 civil forfeiture grant for an educational art project that increased the awareness of sexual exploitation among high-risk youth between 11 and 18 years old.

- The Civil Forfeiture Act allows the Province to seek forfeiture of property that is alleged to have been used to commit, or is the proceeds of, unlawful activity.
- Of the more than 1,770 cases police have referred to the civil forfeiture program, the CFO has acted on over 1,400. Of those, approximately one half are concluded. Today, more than 510 cases are ongoing.

**Learn More:**

To read the Province's Status Report on FORSAKEN – The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, see:

[http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public\\_inquiries/docs/BCGovStatusReport.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public_inquiries/docs/BCGovStatusReport.pdf)

Children of the Street Society:

<http://www.childrenofthestreet.com>

Contact: Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Justice  
250 356-6961

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)

**Ministry of Justice  
MWCI Status Report**

**Questions and Answers – Nov. 4, 2013**

**OVERARCHING**

**1. What are you announcing today?**

- We're taking action to support vulnerable women and youth, as we continue working to build a legacy of safety and security in B.C.
- This includes new Civil Forfeiture Office grant funding of up to \$1 million for projects that prevent the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of vulnerable girls and women.
- We're also announcing a multi-phase project, beginning in the coming months, which will examine how policing is currently structured and funded.
- This project will be consistent with related Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Recommendations and the first action item in the BC Policing Plan.
- As well, a status report we're releasing today shows how significant progress has been made since Commissioner Wally Oppal released his report.
- Work is already underway on one-half of the recommendations directed at us.

**2. Why haven't you done more to respond to the recommendations almost a year later?**

- With more than 56 recommendations directed at the Province in the initial report, I feel like we've shown significant action by starting work on half of them in under a year.
- Even with our steady progress, we recognize there is more that can and must be done. But we cannot undertake this journey alone.
- That is why today we're committed to working with communities and engaging key stakeholders to lend their guidance and advice on the recommendations as we move forward.
- I would also be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the substantive changes that have taken place since the period of time under review by the Commission.
- In addition to significant reforms in policing practices, there have been national, provincial and local-level initiatives to intervene and prevent violence against vulnerable women and to examine issues related to the investigation and prosecution of cases involving the serial murder of women. Work on these issues is ongoing.

**3. When are you going to replace Stephen Point? What about the advisory council?**

- Since Stephen Point's resignation, we've received suggestions and advice from the community and key individuals on how to proceed.
- We've explored the many possibilities, structures and formats that would best support the creation of a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women in B.C.
- Today, I can tell you that, as we move forward on specific recommendations, we're committing to working with those who have the needed expertise.
- We've now begun this engagement process in one area through initial dialogue with members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women.
- Moving ahead, we'll continue to seek advice from other key stakeholders.

#### **4. How do you plan to implement the rest of the recommendations?**

- The MWCI report requires systemic change, which cannot happen overnight. But we are committed to building a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women.
- Moving forward we will continue building on the work done to this point, engaging with key stakeholders and looking to them for their expertise and advice with respect to the recommendations.
- The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report will continue to serve as a blueprint as we work to fulfill the spirit of the recommendations.

#### **5. How much money are you spending to implement the recommendations?**

- In immediate response to the recommendations, the Minister Responsible for Housing committed \$750,000 in annual funding to the WISH Drop-In Centre to allow them to expand services to vulnerable women.
- Through this year's civil forfeiture grants, we will be providing communities with funding to prevent the sexual exploitation and trafficking of vulnerable women, especially Aboriginal young women.
- Addressing vulnerability issues is critical as we continue in our work, but we cannot undertake this journey alone.
- That is why we are also now engaging with key stakeholders and looking to them for their expertise and advice with respect to the recommendations as we continue to move forward.

#### **6. How many of the recommendations are completed?**

- The recommendations from the MWCI report requires systemic change, which cannot happen overnight. But we are committed to building a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women.



- We are actively working on many of the recommendations.

If pressed:

- Progress is underway on half of the 56 recommendations directed at us.

**7. This looks like a pretty small report for 11 months of work. How are the families supposed to feel like you're making progress?**

- It is my hope that the families of these murdered and missing women – along with all British Columbians – can see from this status report that progress is being made.
- With 56 recommendations directed at the Province in the initial report, I feel like we've shown significant action by starting work on half of them in under a year.
- Even with our steady progress, we recognize there is more that can and must be done. But, as I've said, we cannot undertake this journey alone.
- That is why today we're committed to working with communities and engaging key stakeholders to lend their guidance and advice on the recommendations as we move forward.

**8. Did the election hinder your ability to get even more done this year?**

- No, responding to the recommendations has always been a priority for staff in the Ministry of Justice. That did not change during the election.
- With more than 56 recommendations directed at the Province in the initial report, I feel like we've shown significant action by starting work on half of them in under a year.

**CFO GRANTS AVAILABILITY**

**9. What criteria will be used to decide which grants get funding?**

- Ministry staff will assess the proposals using established grant criteria, as they have in the past.

**10. Civil forfeiture keeps bringing more money in every year. Why not provide programs with stable, multi-year funding from civil forfeiture proceeds?**

- Civil forfeiture proceeds have been growing, but many factors in the program's success are beyond the Province's control. The program depends on quality case referrals from police agencies – and all contested cases depend on a forfeiture order by a Supreme Court judge.
- Since there is no certainty about how much may accumulate in a given year, we cannot commit forfeiture proceeds on a multi-year basis.

**11. How much has civil forfeiture taken in and given back since 2006?**

- Civil forfeiture proceeds overall total more than \$40 million, including more than \$8.4 million last year.
- Since 2006, the CFO has returned more than \$11 million from successful forfeiture actions to crime prevention programs and to victims of fraud and phony investment schemes.
- For example, in March of this year we distributed 81 grants worth almost \$1 million to help projects throughout the province counter local crime issues, youth crime, violence against women and family violence, and human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

**12. Why are funds forfeited from a particular community not reinvested back into that same community?**

- The idea of having communities receive back what their respective police forces have referred to the CFO creates two significant problems:
- It improperly positions the program as a guaranteed income stream for a municipality, similar to a tax. In turn, this could result in inappropriate pressure on police to focus on civil forfeiture rather than criminal forfeiture. This would be contrary to the Act and Supreme Court rulings.
- It ignores the fact that small communities also suffer – for example, from drugs, youth gangs, and sexual exploitation of children and youth – even though the assets of the related criminal enterprises are located almost exclusively in major urban centres, where organized criminals typically reside.

**13. Are you providing funding in a way that rewards police agencies and communities equitably for making referrals to civil forfeiture?**

- There is no link between the value of referrals from a particular police agency and the funding that goes back to that agency's jurisdiction. Police understand this. The incentive for them in referring criminal case files for consideration is to use civil forfeiture as one more tool to deter crime and make their communities safer.
- If we linked successful referrals to grants, that could undermine the spirit of our law and the court's support for it. Our law states very clearly that police cannot pursue a case with civil forfeiture as the goal – criminal charges must be the primary concern, and civil forfeiture is a separate, secondary consideration.

**14. Any comment on the "secrecy" with which the Civil Forfeiture Office operates?**

- Protecting the personal information and safety of the office's employees has been a security measure since the outset of the program in 2006.
- The Civil Forfeiture Office's work involves seeking the forfeiture of assets related to unlawful activity, including assets that belong to gang members and people involved in organized crime.

- The CFO takes steps to protect employees who may be at risk given the nature of the case files they handle and the defendants involved in those cases.
- Pursuant to a security assessment and recommendations by the director of corporate security, the ministry will continue to not disclose names or personal details of other CFO staff.
- Accordingly, RCMP and internal ministry security experts have provided input on security measures to mitigate the identified risks involved in the CFO's work.

## **BC POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN ACTION ITEM**

### **15. What are you announcing today with regard to policing structure in B.C.?**

- We're announcing a multi-phase project, beginning in the coming months, which will examine how policing is currently structured and funded.
- This project will be consistent with related Missing Women Commission of Inquiry recommendations and the first action item in the BC Policing Plan.
- We've committed to working to build a legacy of safety and security to better protect vulnerable women, and this exploration of policing structure will further this important goal.

### **16. What's the scope of the work ahead?**

- The project will mirror the first action item in the BC Policing Plan.
- It will engage experts, municipal leaders and police agencies, working to better define federal, provincial and municipal policing responsibilities.
- This will lay the groundwork for exploring new service delivery models and related funding and financing models, while retaining local, community-focused policing.

### **17. Can you tell us who will be involved with the project?**

- Ministry staff is working on related terms of reference.
- Although they have some individuals in mind, finalizing the terms of reference is the priority for now.

### **18. When will the project get underway?**

- We envision having the project underway in the months ahead.
- Consistent with the policing plan action item, initial work will focus on clarifying policing responsibilities at different levels of government.

**19. Does this mean you're going to pursue regional policing?**

- What we'll be doing as part of this project is looking at models ranging from further integration to regional service delivery.
- We know that regionalization of policing isn't a decision that can be made without the input of local governments and stakeholders and the Province will work to fulfill the spirit of the MWI Report recommendations.
- Any change, whether it is regionalization or further integration, has to meet the needs of both communities and taxpayers.

**20. Is further integration or even regionalization in metropolitan centres inevitable?**

- I am not going to speculate on what models may ultimately come forward.
- Given Commissioner Oppal's findings and what government heard in the course of its policing plan consultations, we have a duty to engage key stakeholders in exploring policing models that may better serve vulnerable women and all British Columbians.
- While we've committed specifically to consider models of service delivery ranging from further integration to regional delivery of services, change is not a foregone conclusion.

**21. With the formal consultation period over, when will you release the final version of the BC Policing Plan?**

- Ministry staff is taking time to ensure the policing plan reflects feedback we received during the extended consultation period.
- I expect to release the plan before the end of the year.
- That said, it's important to remember that the plan will be a living document – one we will continue to enhance to address crime prevention and reduction needs in the years ahead.

**22. Lengthy negotiations preceded the new RCMP contract, and the matter of how much the Province will pay for the force's new B.C. headquarters at Green Timbers remains outstanding. Given this, how receptive do you think the different levels of government will be to any recommendations around adjusting policing responsibilities and related funding?**

- I believe the expertise and independence of those we engage in the project will lend credence to whatever recommendations it makes around defining and clarifying policing responsibilities and related funding.
- Certainly, if the project does lead to changes being recommended, past experience suggests we should expect some tough negotiations to follow.

- The good news is that our recent RCMP contract negotiations engaged contract municipalities to an unprecedented degree – and the UBCM Local Government Contract Management Committee has an ongoing role in monitoring and planning their policing costs.

## **FAMILIES**

### **23. Did you tell the families ahead of time about the release of the status report?**

- I've sent a personal letter to the families to make them aware of the status report.
- We also understand this may bring up difficult feelings for them, as they're reminded of what happened to their loved ones.
- Counseling services continue to be available for family members through the Crime Victim Assistance Program. There is also emotional support available to families through their local victim service programs in B.C.
- If family members are in need of more support, they can contact VICTIMLINK BC (1-800-563-0808) to connect with all of the available services within their communities.

### **24. Have you met with the families yet?**

- I regret that I have not met with the families yet, but this is a priority of mine.
- We understand the status report may bring up difficult feelings for them, as they're reminded of what happened to their loved ones.

### **25. What's happening with the civil lawsuits family members have filed against the Province?**

- Lawyers acting on behalf of the Province have filed a response to the civil claims launched by families of victims.
- As this matter is before the courts, comments must be limited.
- The Province remains committed to creating a legacy of safety and security for vulnerable women. In keeping with government's focus on front-line services and cost-effectiveness, the ministry is prioritizing action items for both the immediate and longer terms.
- We have a concrete work plan that outlines how we can move forward to fulfill the spirit of Mr. Oppal's recommendations.

### **26. How much financial support has government provided the families?**

- The Crime Victim Assistance Program has provided approximately \$1.44 million in compensation to family members of missing women in the Pickton case. Counseling services continue to be available for family members.

- Family members received compensation for such things as pain and suffering, counseling and funeral expenses, and loss of love, guidance and affection.
- Victim support was provided to family members during the police investigation, criminal trials and appeals of Robert Pickton, as well as, through the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry process.
- The Province also provided funding for families' legal counsel at the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.
- A secure website was also created for families to obtain up to date information about the case.

## **27. What ongoing support is being provided for families?**

- Counselling services continue to be available for family members through the Crime Victim Assistance Program. There is also emotional support available to families through their local victim service programs in British Columbia.
- If family members are in need of more support, they can contact VICTIMLINK BC (1-800-563-0808) to connect with all of the available services within their communities.

## **STEPHEN POINT RESIGNATION**

### **28. Why did Steven point resign?**

- Nine lawsuits have been filed against the Province by families of Pickton victims, leading Mr. Point to conclude that he must step aside.
- When matters proceed to court, the litigation process takes precedent over all other related processes.

### **29. What did he accomplish?**

- Mr. Point thoughtfully consulted with the families of the missing women, stakeholders on the Downtown Eastside, the RCMP, VPD, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Assembly of First Nations, among others.
- He worked with ministry staff to provide Government with advice on the how best to proceed as we work on implementing the spirit of the recommendations of the MWCI report.
- We are taking some of those steps today, committing to working with communities and engaging key stakeholders – including MACAW – to lend their guidance and advice on the recommendations as we move forward.

**30. How much compensation did Mr. Point receive in salary and expenses?**

- From December 2012 to the end of May 2013, Mr. Point received approximately \$95,800 in salary and expenses.
- Mr. Point was only reimbursed for the expenses he incurred during his time as champion.
- His salary to date has been a wise investment for this essential work which will go a long way toward keeping vulnerable women safe.

**FINAL COSTS - MISSING WOMEN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY:**

**31. What was the total cost of the commission overall?**

- The Province invested \$9.9 million in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.
- The inquiry spanned two years, included 90 days of public hearings and resulted in a six volume, 1,400 page report.

**32. How much did Commissioner Oppal get paid?**

- As Commissioner of the Missing Women Inquiry, Wally Oppal received a rate of \$1500 per day. His fees and expenses total approximately \$880,000.
- Mr. Oppal's daily rate was less than that of the two other recent commissioners.
- This cost reflects the broad scope of the inquiry.

**33. Why did Commissioner Oppal keep getting paid after the final report was released?**

- Payments to Commissioner Oppal were made in 2013 for services related to wrapping up the commission office and some public engagement on the report itself.

**34. How much did \*individual lawyer\* get paid? Why are some salaries available in public accounts and through FOIs while others aren't?**

- Government makes every effort to be transparent in our contracting procedures.
- In some circumstances, we are unable to release contract details because they are protected by solicitor-client privilege.
- For example, this applies to lawyers Cameron Ward and Neil Chantler who were contracted to represent families of the victims. In these cases, the families are the client and would be the ones that would have to waive that privilege for the amount to be released.

**35. Why aren't you providing a more detailed breakdown of costs?**

- Many of the costs are itemized as part of public accounts.

- As part of establishing an independent commission to report on a matter of public importance, government sets the rate of the commissioner and the terms of reference.
- There are instances where solicitor-client privilege applies and prevents those costs from being broken down.
- The commission determined its own operational needs and budget, including rates of pay and contract terms for staff.
- We looked to the commission, as we do with all commissions, to be prudent in the use of public funds and to adhere to government procurement policies.

### **36. Why did this commission cost so much more than other commissions?**

- Cost comparisons with other inquiries need to be approached with caution – so much depends on the complexity of the issues being reviewed, the number of participants in the process, and the amount of evidence the commissioner must consider.
- The mandates of the Braidwood Commission, which cost \$5.3 million, and the Davies Commission, which cost \$3.3 million, were narrower in comparison and examined different sets of circumstances within shorter timeframes.
- The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry examined events that took place over a long period of time – between 1997 and 2002 – and involved more than 90 days of public hearings involving about 300 people.

### **37. Why didn't government do more to manage costs?**

- It is important to recognize that the commission is independent from government.
- Government establishes an independent commission to report on a matter of public importance and sets the rate for the commissioner.
- The commissioner is then responsible for determining the commission's operational needs and budget, including rates of pay and contract terms for staff.

## **FEDERAL ISSUES:**

### **38. Is B.C. planning to work with the federal government on the implementation of any of the remaining recommendations?**

- Our government is committed to creating a legacy of safety for vulnerable women in B.C.
- We have fulfilled our promise to share results of our Missing Women Commission of Inquiry with other jurisdictions.



- B.C. has been a leader at the national level since 2006 in addressing issues related to missing women as chair of the FPT missing women working group until earlier this year.
- Work is already underway to implement that group's 52 recommendations.
- We are leading the work with federal, provincial and territorial justice ministers to develop a framework to address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
- And, we support a call by Aboriginal leaders to launch a national public inquiry into the case of missing or murdered Aboriginal women.

**39. Is government considering a National Women Inquiry?**

- It goes without question that the disappearance and murder of a loved one is a tragic situation for any family to have to endure.
- Our government is committed to creating a legacy of safety for vulnerable women in B.C.
- And, we support a call by Aboriginal leaders to launch a national public inquiry into the case of missing or murdered Aboriginal women.

**HIGHWAY OF TEARS:**

**40. When is government going to develop and implement an enhanced public transit system, as the commissioner urged?**

- I understand the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is reviewing the transportation options which are currently available and will be holding discussions with local government representatives.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will continue working with my ministry to coordinate their further work in follow-up to the Commission of Inquiry report.