

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

CLIFF: 230213

PREPARED FOR: Minister Stephanie Cadieux - **FOR INFORMATION**

TITLE: Report from Special Advisor – Grand Chief Ed John

PURPOSE: To provide an overview of the contents of the report for consideration

BACKGROUND:

- Grand Chief Ed John was contracted in September 2015 as Special Advisor to Minister Cadieux on Aboriginal children in care, Permanency and Early years.
- Since that time, the Grand Chief has lead discussion in over 75 communities with First Nations leaders, DAAs and the ministry.
- Concluding his mandate, he has produced a report which was provided to the Ministry in draft on October 11, 2016.
- The report, titled “Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions”, provides a detailed analysis of Aboriginal Child Welfare in BC.
- The report is based on the Grand Chief’s personal experiences meeting with families, leaders in Aboriginal Communities and other stakeholders all across the province, as well as his past experiences and understanding of the current legal and legislative landscape.
- The report makes 85 recommendations, with an additional 92 sub recommendations and clarifying statements. The recommendations are divided into ten “areas for focused action”:
 - Direct Support for Indigenous Children, Parents and Families in all Indigenous Communities
 - Access to Justice and Child and Family Services
 - A New Fiscal Relationship – Investing in Patterns of Connectedness
 - Prevention Services – Keeping Families Connected
 - Re-unification and Permanency Planning
 - Nurturing a Sense of Belonging and Prioritizing Culture and Language – Care Plans as a tool for building connectedness
 - Early Years – Early Investment in Establishing Patterns of Connectedness
 - Indigenous Peoples and Jurisdiction Over Child Welfare
 - The Existing Policy Framework – Shifting Towards Patterns of Connectedness
 - A National Strategy for Indigenous Child Welfare
- General themes that emerge across the recommendations include, re-unification and permanency for Aboriginal children, reconciliation with First Nations centred on their children in care, protocol development and prevention/family preservation.
- The report makes recommendations to MCFD, Canada, DAA’s and First Nation Leadership, directing all parties to work collectively towards an Indigenous, community led Child Welfare system - work that has started post the Family Gathering in May 2016.

DISCUSSION:

- Since September, Ministry staff have been working from early drafts of the report's recommendations to begin costing and planning exercises in support of future implementation actions.
- This work has focused on ensuring recommendations from the report are reflected in the business cases developed for the s.12,s.13
s.12,s.13 Note that the full cost implications of the report have not yet been determined.
- Initial reviews by Ministry staff and s.14
s.14
- s.12,s.13,s.14,s.16
- s.14
- The report also makes recommendations to the Federal Government in a number of areas, notably, funding for services, prevention and areas of jurisdiction between the province, federal government and FN's.
- The report makes extensive use of direct quotes – mostly from FN chiefs and families
s.13
- As the report remains draft with an unclear release date, there has been no public statement from government to date as to the response to the report and its recommendations.

ADVICE:

- Detailed review of the report and its recommendations will take some time for ministry staff to complete.
- It is not possible to provide comprehensive advice on next steps until this review can be completed and the full scope of the recommendations understood from a fiscal, legal, practice and operational perspective.

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