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## MINISTRY PROFILE

## Ministry:

The Declaration Act Secretariat supports the province in its efforts to establish true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. The Secretariat is charged with coordinating and assisting the cross-government efforts to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as per section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (the Declaration Act):

***Measures to align laws with Declaration***

*3. In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the Declaration.*

## Ministry Mandate:

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019. Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires the Province, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous peoples, to take “all measures necessary” to ensure consistency between the laws of British Columbia and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Since 2019, the Province has taken some measures pursuant to section 3. The most significant measure was the formation of the Declaration Act Secretariat, established in Budget 2022. The mandate of the Secretariat is to ensure legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration and is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, as required by Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Reporting directly to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Secretariat guides and assists ministries in meeting the alignment of laws obligations, collaborates within government on changes to government’s legislative and policy processes, and helps establish government’s legislative priorities related to alignment of laws.

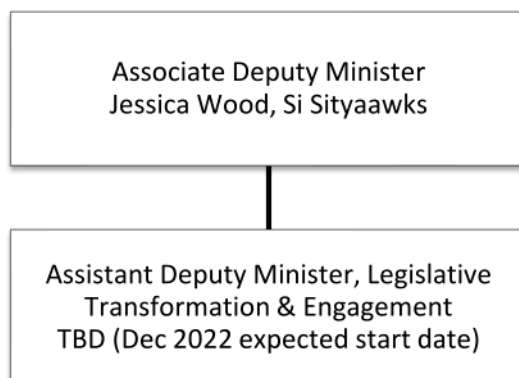
The Secretariat’s core functions are:

- provide guidance on consultation and cooperation and consistency of laws;
- develop processes and measures to support alignment of laws;
- inform government’s legislative agenda; and
- serve in an interlocutor role.

An Advisory Forum will provide advice to the Secretariat on legislative proposals and initiatives and provide a means for Indigenous expertise and experience with meeting the standards of the UN Declaration to be brought into government.

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 22 (work is ongoing with PSA to hire approved positions. Currently have 2 permanent roles)

Executive Organizational Chart:



Budget:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	\$000				
Operations	0.000	3.213	4.394	4.441	12.048
<b>Total Base Budget</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>3.213</b>	<b>4.394</b>	<b>4.441</b>	<b>12.048</b>
Contingency	0.000	1.071	0.000	0.000	1.071
<b>Total Secretariat Budget</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.284</b>	<b>4.394</b>	<b>4.441</b>	<b>13.119</b>

- Budget 2022 committed \$12.048M over the fiscal plan to implement the Declaration Act Secretariat (22 FTEs). In addition, \$1.071M in approval in principle contingencies was provided to fund the balance of the requested staffing costs in 2022/23 if expected hiring lag is not realized.
- Work is ongoing with PSA to get classifications, exclusions, and position numbers to hire approved positions.
- DAS was able to support 1 Indigenous Youth Intern (IYIP) position in the 2022/23 intake and has an MOU with the PSA to fiscally support a second Indigenous Youth Intern.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Jessica Wood

*Si Sityaawks*

Associate Deputy Minister  
Declaration Act Secretariat  
BC Public Service Agency

*Si Sityaawks* – (Woman who creates change) is from the Gitksan and Tsimshian First Nations, with extended roots among the Tahltan and Nisga’a Nations.

Currently serving as Associate Deputy Minister of the Declaration Act Secretariat, Jessica is leading British Columbia’s cross-ministry work to align provincial laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

Jessica previously served as Assistant Deputy Minister for the Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. In that role she was responsible for the development and implementation of the BC Declaration Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action, and the implementation of learnings from relevant case law. Most recently, as part of this transformation, in collaboration Indigenous peoples, she led the development of the first BC Declaration Act Action Plan, released in March 2022. The Plan was developed with Indigenous Peoples to ensure it reflects the priorities of Indigenous Peoples and outlines 89 specific actions every ministry will take over a five-year period.

Jessica was recently the second Policy Practitioner Fellow at UBC’s School of Public Policy and Global Affairs. She is an experienced community developer whose portfolios have focused on issues related to race relations, residential schools, sexual health, sex work, Indigenous women, and gendered violence. She was the first Indigenous woman in Canada whose work as a municipal social planner focused solely on the health and safety of sex workers and impacted communities, gendered and racialized violence, and the prevention of youth sexual exploitation.

Jessica has previously held positions working on the Residential School Settlement Agreement and National Film Board Directory *Finding Dawn*, a film about missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. Jessica is a long-time organizer with the Vancouver DTES Women’s Memorial March Committee.

**Declaration Act Secretariat  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Engagement and Legislative Transformation**

**Victoria, BC (Other locations may be considered)**

**Salary  
ADM Level 1 range \$150,900.25 - \$192,500.16**

## **Ministry Overview**

The Declaration Act Secretariat supports the province in its efforts to establish true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. The Secretariat is charged with coordinating and assisting the cross-government efforts to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align laws with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), as per section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (the Declaration Act):

### ***Measures to align laws with Declaration***

3. *In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the Declaration.*

The Secretariat provides an important means for government to achieve this obligation. The Secretariat assists ministries to deliver substantive measures to support a coherent, consistent, and systemic implementation of the Declaration Act, especially the alignment of laws obligations in Section 3 of the Act.

Recognizing that implementation of the Declaration Act, the UN Declaration and Constitutionally protected title and rights requires an integrated, “whole of government” effort.

The Secretariat plays a central coordination role, to develop processes, and advise and guide ministries on consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples and on consistency of legislation with the UN Declaration.

Legislative planning must include Declaration Act implementation considerations, which the Secretariat will help to embed in government

