

October 4th marks the anniversary of two particularly important events; the annual Sisters in Spirit vigil and the Thank for Listening report release.

Content Warning - This News Release contains content related to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. If you find yourself struggling with the content take care, take time, and return when and if you feel ready.

Before we begin, MNBC would like to acknowledge the labour of the Indigenous women and girls, families and survivors, whose time and energy has gone into investigating the colonial systems for root causes of racialized violence. We honour your courage and ferocity to speak out against the colonial systems of violence. We would also like to acknowledge grassroots organizations, services providers, and advocacy groups for their efforts to support the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. There is no healing for Indigenous people without the accountability and healing within our own nation and the country that was built upon the suffering and genocide of Indigenous people.

MNBC acknowledges that historically this work has centered around Indigenous women and girls, and is committed to ensuring that Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQQIA+) people are engaged and included in every aspect of this work towards a future free of violence.

The Sisters in Spirit Campaign

The Sisters in Spirit campaign came from a research initiative launched by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) in 2004. In May of 2005, NWAC was awarded \$5 million in funding over a 5-year span to support the work of investigating the root causes of violence and to help inform policy to support the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

Through storytelling by families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and through informant interviews, focus groups and community workshops, NWAC was able to release the Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit report in 2008 and a 2nd Edition in 2009. The report indicated that from 1970-2009, NWAC was able to identify 520 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls; 67% of the 520 cases were identified that the women and girls had died due to homicide or negligence and that 24% were still missing. The results also indicated that BC had the highest number of cases at 26% (137 cases), with a large proportion of cases stemming from the Highway of Tears (Highway 16) and in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver

During the 1990s, British Columbia's Highway 16 became known as the "Highway of Tears" after more than thirty-two Indigenous women and girls had been reported either missing or murdered. The Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit report concluded with recommendations for future policy development, this work can be found on a larger scale in the National Inquiry's

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Reclaiming Power and Place report and 231 Calls for Justice.

The legacy of this advocacy has resulted in an annual Sisters In Spirit vigil on October 4th, since 2005. Every October, communities across Canada come together to honour the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+) and to stand alongside their families to offer support, educate the public, and commemorate the lives of our Indigenous women and girls.

“Today we honour and remember missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their families. I believe that every part of our society, from governments, to organizations, to institutions, to individuals, must be accountable and commit to substantive actions that end all forms of gender-and race-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.” - Jana Schulz, Region 4 Women’s Representative

Thanks For Listening Report

October 4th also marks the one-year anniversary of the Thanks for Listening report launch. The report emerged from the “Sashing Our Warriors” campaign, a grassroots movement that calls attention to the impact of violence on our otherwise invisible Métis women and girls.

MNBC, in collaboration with researchers Natalie Clark, Patricia Baraskas, and Robline Davey sought to collect the experiences of Métis women and girls who have experienced violence through an online survey and two focus groups to ensure that supports and initiatives are inclusive of the Métis voice. Close to 400 Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people completed the survey.

The launch of the report on October 4th of 2021, the same day as Sisters In Spirit, was to bring awareness to the epidemic of violence towards Métis women which is not widely known or visible.

See the following links for more information: [Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit National Inquiry’s Final Report](#), [231 Call for Justice](#), [Thanks for Listening Report](#), [Ending Violence Association of BC](#) and learn the [Signal for Help](#).

If you or someone you know is in crisis:

VictimLinkBC Toll-Free Number 1-800-563-0808 (Call or text)

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Trans Lifeline Toll-Free Number 1-877-330-6366
Métis Crisis line at 1-833-Metis-BC (1-833-638-4722)



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