



Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues

Annual Report 2019–2020



Message from the Chair

Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues [YACWI] was formed in 1987 when Margaret Joe, the Minister of Justice at the time, and the first Indigenous woman named to Cabinet, understood that there was a real need to address issues affecting the lives of women in the Yukon. With the support of Yukon government and partners, YACWI became a vehicle of positive change.

YACWI advises the Minister in order to encourage women's needs and issues to come to light, then be addressed. YACWI is also tasked with other issues such as reviewing policies, programs, and legislation affecting women as directed by the Minister.

The strength of YACWI lies in the representation of women from rural Yukon, First Nations and other strong women who represent various cultural groups and organizations. These women listen to the voices of women in their communities and bring forward their concerns and issues to the Minister. From these voices, solutions are sought and brought into being. Key examples of this would be our advocacy for the Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing Complex in 2010 and the Women's Legal Advocate position in 2015. We have also hosted regular YACWI Forums that are venues for the exchange of information, conversation, and knowledgeable speakers from Canada and the world.

I am constantly inspired by the hard work and resiliency of the women's groups here in Yukon. Their work to provide emergency shelter, services, and support is essential in the continued success of Yukon women and girls. On behalf of YACWI, I would like to extend our thanks for their important work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am honoured to work with an incredible group of strong, wise women. It is my pleasure to serve alongside the current members of YACWI: Karen Keenan, Michelle Carmichael, and Judy Hartling. I would also like to extend my gratitude, on behalf of YACWI, to departing member Joyia Chakungal. We thank you for your time and effort in helping shape the Yukon into a more inclusive place.

While the reality of women's lives have improved in the Yukon over the last 30 years since YACWI's inception, we are a long way from reaching our goals. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report, housing

shortages, high rates of gender-based violence, and barriers to accessing services illustrate just some of the ongoing struggles that must be addressed.

Looking forward, we are preparing to work with Minister McLean and the Women's Directorate to collaborate on the re-visioning of YACWI. Since its inception, YACWI has had an integral role in providing direct communication between grass roots women and organizations to the Minister. Re-visioning will ensure that YACWI can retain its roots, but also change to reflect the new realities of the territory.

We are committed to the continuing the work of advocating for women and bringing forward recommendations that will one day result in true equality for all Yukoners.

On behalf of YACWI,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yvonne Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Yvonne" and last name "Clark" clearly distinguishable.

Yvonne Clark, Chair

About the Council

The Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues (YACWI) was established by the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act in May 1992. The Council is comprised of eight members appointed by the Commissioner of Yukon. At least 50 per cent of members must be from rural areas and 25 per cent must be Yukon First Nations.

YACWI members are currently working with Minister McLean and the Women's Directorate to collaborate on the revisioning of YACWI. Since its inception, YACWI has had an integral role in providing direct communication between grass roots women and organizations to the Minister. The revisioning process will bring together input from YACWI members and equality-seeking organizations in order to ensure the Council is the most effective and representative advisory body possible.

The act mandates YACWI to:

- Develop public awareness issues affecting the status of women;
- Promote a change of attitudes within 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 responsible for the Women's Directorate;
- 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.

Meetings

June 7th-8th, 2019

YACWI met in Whitehorse over two days in June. They discussed the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and how to make the report more accessible. They also discussed options for a YACWI Forum.

January 18th, 2020

The first meeting of 2020 began with a discussion around the revisioning of YACWI and opportunity to provide any suggestions to improve the process. The Women's Directorate then provided an update on the Yukon Strategy on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and reviewed the process led by the Yukon Advisory Committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. In the afternoon, William Steinburg from the Department of Justice delivered a presentation on the Missing Persons Act legislation and YACWI provided feedback.

Members

- Yvonne Clarke, Whitehorse, YT
- Karen Keenan, Teslin, YT
- Michelle Carmichael, Dawson, YT
- Judy Hartling, Whitehorse, YT

Administration

2019/20 budget

- Travel: \$6,045
- Honoraria: \$5,438
- Contracts: \$1,832
- Room Rental: \$300
- Entertainment: \$1,278

Total \$14,893

Contact Us

For more information about YACWI, contact the Women's Directorate at (867) 667-3030 or toll free at 1-800-661-0408 ext. 3030.