



## Government of Yukon

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FOR RELEASE #11-045  
 March 22, 2011

### Police review recommendations are underway

WHITEHORSE—A number of recommendations contained in Sharing Common Ground, the report of the Review of Yukon's Police Force, continue to move forward Justice Minister Marian C. Horne announced today.

The Government of Yukon, in partnership with the RCMP and key stakeholders, will begin work immediately on the following initiatives:

- Establish the Yukon Police Council to give citizens the opportunity to make recommendations, to encourage accountability and to provide input into policing services in the Territory. The council will also aid in the implementation of further recommendations. It will be operational by summer, 2011.
- Establish an agreement with an existing civilian investigative agency to ensure that fair and independent external investigations of serious incidents involving the RCMP are conducted. An agreement with the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) is being negotiated and is expected to be in place by fall, 2011.
- Establish a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coordinating Committee to develop a comprehensive framework and to coordinate the response of service providers. In addition, the Government of Yukon is committed to providing funding to "M" Division for a domestic violence response team.
- In partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and Yukon College, establish a law enforcement career orientation program at the Northern Institute of Social Justice (NISJ) to prepare First Nations and women for a career in law enforcement or the justice system.

"Yukon government is moving quickly to implement the recommendations brought forward by the co-chairs of the review," Horne said. "These four initiatives were identified as priorities of our government, our First Nations partners and other stakeholders."

The Yukon government is also committed to working in partnership with First Nations to implement the recommendations of the Review of Yukon's Police Force.

"Yukon First Nation leaders are pleased that action to implement the recommendations has continued so quickly," CYFN Chief Ruth Massie said. "This demonstrates how important it is to work together as governments to achieve positive results on initiatives such as this one which will address our concerns with policing in the territory."

Other priorities for the Government of Yukon and CYFN are to establish an independent civilian complaints co-ordinator to assist citizens who have concerns with policing services, and to

work with the RCMP to establish an RCMP First Nations relations advisor who will report to the Commanding Officer of "M" Division.

"M" Division is committed to improving police service delivery and in building trust for all Yukon citizens in the RCMP as the police service of choice," Chief Superintendent Peter Clark said. "We are encouraged by the Government of Yukon's commitment to working with us in providing the RCMP with the resources needed to effect positive and lasting change."

For more Information about the Review of Yukon's Police Force visit:  
[www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca](http://www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca).

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See backgrounder below.

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## **Backgrounder – Implementation of Review of Yukon Police Force Recommendation**

### **Police Council**

- A Yukon Police Council will be established to provide a means for citizens to have input into the delivery of policing services in the territory.
- The council will consist of six members and will be chaired by the deputy minister of Justice. Three of the six members will be nominated by Yukon First Nations.
- A call for nominations for the police council will be issued this spring and the first meeting will be held this summer.
- The first task for the police council will be to work with First Nations and stakeholders to develop an implementation framework for the remaining recommendations included in the Review of Yukon's Police Force.
- The role of the council is to make written recommendations to the minister and the Commanding Officer of "M" Division on issues relating to the delivery of policing services in Yukon, including:
  - Establishing core policing values that reflect Yukon's history and cultural heritage;
  - Ensuring that community needs and values are reflected in the policing priorities;
  - Objectives, programs and strategies of "M" Division;
  - Establishing policing practices and standards for "M" Division;
  - Ensuring that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community needs, values and expectations;
  - Acting as a liaison between the community and "M" Division;
  - Participating in the selection of the "M" Division Commanding Officer; and
  - Receiving reports on matters that affect the administration of justice, including Annual Performance Plan updates, public complaints, use of conducted energy weapons, and

updates on high-profile matters.

- The Yukon Police Council may meet with First Nations, municipalities, non-government organizations, or others in carrying out its duties, and will coordinate activities with national organizations such as Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP and the Canadian Association of Police Boards.

#### **Agreement with Alberta's Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT)**

- A common concern heard by the co-chairs of the police review was the issue of the RCMP investigating its own members or employees when they are involved in a serious incident. This concern is common across Canada and citizens have said they want an agency that is independent of the RCMP to conduct sensitive investigations involving RCMP members and employees.
- In early 2010, the RCMP implemented the External Investigation and Review Policy to ensure that investigations of RCMP employees are fair, effective, thorough, impartial, culturally sensitive and conducted in a manner that promotes public confidence. The policy directs the RCMP to look for an appropriate provincial or federally established body to conduct the investigation. If no such body exists a provincial or municipal police force will be asked to conduct the investigation. The policy has been triggered in a number of cases in the Yukon in the last year.
- In response to these concerns from citizens, the co-chairs of the police review recommended that in implementing the interim RCMP External Investigation and Review policy, "M" Division first contact a civilian police investigation agency. Moreover, the co-chairs recommended that the Department of Justice enter into an agreement with an existing civilian police investigation agency to provide external investigations as required by "M" Division.
- The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) performs this function in Alberta. ASIRT is an agency of the Government of Alberta; it is led by a civilian director who is a lawyer and crown prosecutor. Its investigations are conducted by four civilian investigators and ten sworn police officers drawn from the Calgary Police Service, the Edmonton Police Service and the RCMP.
- ASIRT may be called upon when a police officer is the subject of a criminal investigation, is charged with a serious crime, is involved in a shooting, or when a person dies in custody or from the actions of a police officer.
- Currently, there is no Yukon-based civilian independent investigation agency. In response to the police review recommendation, the Department of Justice will be entering into an agreement with the Government of Alberta, and Yukon will provide on-going funding for one investigator to be added to the ASIRT team.
- Alberta will agree to make an ASIRT investigator, or investigators, available on an "as needed basis" to investigate incidents where there is a serious injury or death of an individual involving an RCMP employee, or where it appears that an employee of the RCMP may have contravened a provision of the Criminal Code or other statute and the matter is of a serious or sensitive nature.
- Those investigators will not be members of the RCMP, and will follow direction from the Yukon Department of Justice.
- The provision of an additional investigator to ASIRT will cost approximately \$150,000 per year which will be cost shared by Yukon and Canada at 70 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coordinating Committee**

- Concerns about the response to domestic violence and sexual assault in Yukon were raised throughout the Review of Yukon's Police Force. Yukoners want to see a coordinated, consistent and informed response from police and other service providers.
- Yukon government is establishing a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coordinating Committee to develop a framework to coordinate service providers' response to domestic violence and sexual assault.
- This committee will assist in developing the framework for the RCMP Domestic Violence/Abuse Team (DVAT), a specialized unit within "M" Division, to investigate domestic violence and sexual assault, by fall of this year.
- The framework will include consideration of a specialized prosecution service, clarification of charging protocols in domestic violence situations, an update of the role of the Sexual Assault Response Committee (SARC), specialized training for RCMP and front line responders and consideration of an advocate for victims to support them through the court process.

**First Nation Law Enforcement Career Orientation Program**

- The police review co-chairs heard repeatedly of the need to rebuild the relationship between the RCMP and First Nations communities. One way is to involve First Nations citizens in the delivery of police services and in other areas within the justice system.
- The co-chairs felt that it is important to support those First Nations citizens who show an interest in law enforcement and support them so that they can become members of the RCMP.
- In response to the police review recommendations, the Justice minister will approve funding for 2011-12 fiscal year to CYFN and the Yukon College Northern Institute of Social Justice (NISJ) to develop a Yukon First Nations career orientation program in partnership with the RCMP to prepare citizens for RCMP training at Depot Division.
- This funding will include the creation of a career orientation program designed to encourage First Nation youth and women to consider a career in law enforcement.
- The goal of the program would be to recruit First Nations citizens who have an interest in working in the justice system and provide knowledge and skills-based training. The program would also assist people interested in joining the RCMP with the application process and prepare them for entry into Depot Division.
- In 2009 NISJ delivered a correctional officer career exploration training program for women that was well received by participants and resulted in ten women — two of whom were Yukon First Nations — being hired as correctional officers.

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