



FOR RELEASE

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New Yukon team fosters more effective response to domestic violence and sexualized assault

WHITEHORSE—As part of National Police Week commemorations, the Yukon government is pleased to recognize that a key element of the *Sharing Common Ground* report was fully implemented this year. The Yukon RCMP Specialized Response Unit (SRU), aimed at improving the response to domestic violence and sexualized assault, has been established and fully staffed.

The Government of Yukon increased the Territorial Police Service Budget in order for the Yukon RCMP to establish this team. Improving the response to sexualized assault and family violence is one of Yukon's five Policing Priorities recently communicated to the Commanding Officer, and was a key recommendation in the *Sharing Common Ground* report based on a review of Yukon's police services.

"Establishing the Specialized Response Unit addresses a key gap which Yukoners identified during the Review of Yukon's Police Force. Our government is committed to implementing the recommendations of *Sharing Common Ground* and improving the response to domestic violence and sexualized assault," Justice Minister Mike Nixon said. "National Police Week is a time to recognize the contributions and advances made by police forces across Canada. In Yukon, the RCMP has made significant strides in strengthening relationships with communities and enhancing the ability to respond to Yukoners' needs and priorities."

The SRU began its preliminary work in May 2012 and all staff were in place in January of this year. The SRU provides guidance, assistance and oversight to any detachments or units in Yukon responding to domestic violence and sexualized assaults. The unit also works with other groups to increase collaboration and coordinate responses to victims, and may lead investigations where more specialized services are required.

"We are very proud of the progress we have made in implementing *Sharing Common Ground* – both in strengthening our relationships with our communities and First Nations, and in focusing our services on the issues that are most important to Yukoners," Chief Superintendent and Commanding Officer of the RCMP in Yukon Peter Clark said. "The Specialized Response Unit plays a key role in coaching, training and assisting all of our investigators in these highly sensitive and difficult cases."

The four RCMP members of the SRU each have an enhanced knowledge of domestic violence and sexualized assault, specialized training, and proven skill in providing service for victims in these areas. SRU members have been active in reviewing case files and providing guidance and assistance to investigators across Yukon. They have also been working closely with other organizations to provide enhanced support to victims, and have been delivering specialized training on interviewing techniques to both police and partner agencies.

"In Yukon, where rates of violence against women are critically high, the specialized skills, expertise and attention brought by the SRU are of utmost importance," Executive Director of Kaushee's Place and representative for the Women's Coalition Barbara McInerney said. "The

coalition has been impressed by the work of the unit thus far. We look forward to continuing the increased communication, collaboration, and focus on violence against women.”

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Contact:

Matthew Grant
Cabinet Communications
867-393-6470
matthew.grant@gov.yk.ca

Shari-Lynn MacLellan
Communications, Justice
867-456-6583
shari-lynn.maclellan@gov.yk.ca

David Gilbert
Yukon RCMP
867-667-5581
david.gilbert@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

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