



Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues

Annual Report 2021–2022



Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues (YACWI), I feel honoured to be in a position to work closely with such an amazing group of women.

Together, we bring a diversity of perspectives from First Nations, rural Yukon, parents and a variety of professional experiences. Demonstrating a commitment towards women's concerns and issues, these women are each dedicated to the work that must be done and bringing current matters forward to the attention of the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. Working together to create the opportunity to advance priorities and foster change in the Yukon, these women bring passion and demonstrable dedication to the table.

This year, YACWI members include Judy Hartling, Karen Keenan, Rowan MacPhail, Zara Soukoroff and Cindy Allen. The focus thus far has been to narrow down the priorities that we will focus on for the duration of our term. Discussions have centred around the lack of rural transportation, taxi safety, after-school childcare, and safe and affordable housing.

Focusing on priorities that impact women in both rural and urban settings, YACWI will continue to seek first to understand the issues and challenges through discussions with advocacy groups, policy makers and implementers, and then determine where the most impact can be made. As YACWI moves forward, the council will continue to refine its priorities and actions in order to best support Minister McLean and the Directorate in their continued mandate to advance equitable economic, legal and social outcomes for all genders and sexual orientations.

Sincerely,



Tracy Thomas

Chair

Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues

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 can be comprised of up to 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.

The Act mandates YACWI to:

- develop public awareness of issues affecting the status of women;
- promote a change of attitudes within the Yukon so that 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 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.

Year-in-review

In 2021, the former Chair of YACWI was elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly and as such, stepped down from her position. In the absence of a chair, the council was not able to meet. The Women and Gender Equity Directorate advertised recruitment for a chair to encourage Yukoners to submit an application for consideration. Simultaneously, recruitment continued for other YACWI members. Applications were received in fall 2021. New members and a chair were appointed in December 2021. Following that, planning began for the first meeting of the new YACWI members, which focused on priority setting for their term.

Meetings

February 10, 2022

The first meeting of this year's YACWI members focused on background and orientation, including mandate and function of the council, the legislation, and operation of YACWI. Council members reviewed the results from the revisioning process for YACWI and recommendations to address challenges with member recruitment and retention, as well as LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. The council began identifying potential priorities for their work ahead, including such topics as human rights legislation, childcare, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, affordable and safe housing, and safe transportation.

Members as of March 31, 2022

Tracy Thomas, Chair

Tracy brings her passion for equity and women's safety to the table, with a healthy dose of lived experiences. Originally from northern Ontario, she has been north of 60 for over 20 years, first in Nunavut and then from 2008 onwards in the Yukon. Her career at the executive level has spanned health and social services, wellness, training, mining, First Nation governance and development, and now municipal government, always with an eye to improving the quality of life of the local population. Her children have grown up here and now are raising the next generation here as well. She is thrilled to be a part of this council and working with like-minded people to both effect and affect positive change that will benefit women in all walks of life but with a special emphasis on the vulnerable.

Judy Hartling

Judy has lived in the Yukon since 1992. She practised criminal law and is now retired. Judy remains an avid skier and paddler.

Rowan McPhail

Rowan moved to the Yukon in 2019 and has worked for the Yukon Human Rights Commission, as a private practice lawyer at a small local firm, and currently works as a labour relations advisor at the Yukon Employees' Union. When not working, you can find Rowan cross country skiing, attempting to make pottery or walking with her husky-mix, Two Socks.

Cindy Allen

Cindy Allen is a northern Indigenous woman with Weledeh, Yellowknives Dene, Tlicho and settler ancestry. She is the daughter of Christine Allen (nee Doctor) and Richard Allen and is the granddaughter of Marie-Adee and Gabriel Doctor. She is a Treaty 8 member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation from the Northwest Territories and is a Wolf Clan member. Cindy is a lawyer with the law firm Woodward and Company.

Zara Soukoroff

Zara is a born and raised Yukoner, and a mom of two boys. She has worked as a communications analyst for the Government of Yukon's Public Service Commission since 2019. Zara's passion for women's equity began early in her life, but was bolstered by her experience with postpartum depression and the health care system in 2014. Since then, she has founded the Facebook page 'Whitehorse Babies and Kids Social,' which allows parents to easily find information to support themselves and their families. Her hobbies include finishing her Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and trying to remember what hobbies are after a day with two young kids.

Karen Keenan

Karen Keenan is a long-time advocate for equality. She is a member of Teslin Tlingit Council where she resides today with her family.

Administration

2021-22 expenditures

- Travel: \$0
- Honouraria: \$437.50
- Contracts: \$350
- Room rental: \$0
- Entertainment: \$0

Total expenditures: \$787.50

Contact us

For more information about YACWI, email the Women and Gender Equity Directorate at stephanie.coulthard@yukon.ca or phone 867-667-3030, toll free in the Yukon 1-800-661-0408, extension 3030.