

NWAC President's Report

This publication highlights the various activities the President has undertaken throughout the month of September.

LORRAINE WHITMAN

Lorraine Whitman was elected as the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada on September 14, 2019. Prior to her presidency at NWAC, Ms. Whitman served as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and has been advocating for Indigenous women's rights over the past 45 years.



February President's Report

My Dear Friends,

The missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) file continues to be a key focus of much of my work as President.



It will soon be two years since the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its Final Report and 231 Calls for Justice. Cited as legal imperatives (not optional), the Inquiry indicated upfront: "The steps to end and redress this genocide must be no less monumental than the combination of systems and actions that has worked to maintain colonial violence for generations." The report went on to state that "a permanent commitment to ending the genocide requires addressing the four pathways are:

- historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma
- social and economic marginalization
- maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will
- ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people

And, still we are waiting for the federal government to issue its national action plan, which is to outline how it will address the Calls for Justice—and begin the healing process for Indigenous women, girls, gender-diverse people, and communities as a whole. This month I took part in several meetings around the MMIWG file, with a particular focus on transportation and highway safety; health care service delivery; and gender-based violence.

NWAC continues to keep our international partners, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, apprised of any progress being made on the MMIWG file.

Thank you, Wela'lin


President Lorraine Whitman
 [@LWhitman_NWAC](https://twitter.com/LWhitman_NWAC)

My February Agenda

A great deal of my focus this month was on the missing and murdered women and girls issue. In addition to participating in weekly MMIWG core meetings and bi-weekly MMIWG advisory meetings, I took part in the following meetings/sessions.

Meeting with the FPT Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

For the second year in a row I was invited to speak to the federal-provincial-territorial ministers responsible for transportation and highway safety. I stressed how important the transportation system is to the lifeblood of Indigenous communities, especially remote fly-in communities—where food insecurity is real and where planes that deliver supplies are essential services. These services cost lots of money, which drives up everything, even a single banana. Transportation also plays an important role in the delivery of health care services. Reduced bus services in many northern communities across the country also makes life more dangerous in general.

I asked the ministers to:

- fund reliable and reasonably priced ways of getting essential goods like food to Indigenous communities within their jurisdictions
- support safe and secure transportation networks and services

Women and Gender Equality Canada

NWAC participates in the regular update meetings of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), Minister Maryam Monsef's Advisory Council on Gender-Based Violence. At the February 19th meeting, we received updates from WAGE on emergency COVID-19 funding, the new feminist recovery fund, and pre-budget 2021 consultations; Women's Shelter Canada on the national shelter project; and YWCA Canada. Ms. Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, also updated us on the [Joint Declaration for a Canada free of Gender-Based Violence](#), which was endorsed on January 22.

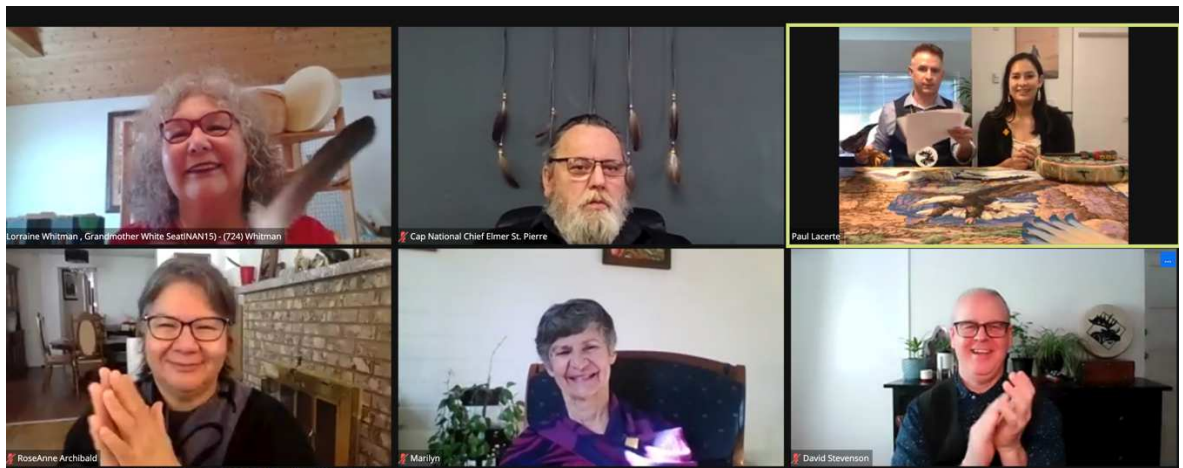
MMIWG Webinar

NWAC hosted the webinar "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Persons in Canada" on February 9. Commissioner Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Memory, Truth and justice for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights based in Washington, DC, was the keynote speaker. Ms. Noguera emphasized the role that Indigenous women can play in the reparations process. Other speakers included Laval University law professor Fannie Lafontaine and Nelsy Maricella Ku Chay, coordinator of the Network of Houses of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Women (REDCAMI). NWAC will be drawing upon their expertise as the follow-up to the National Inquiry into MMIWG advances.

Aligning with the Moose Hide Campaign

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. This organization recognizes that the cycle of violence against Indigenous women and girls came from residential schools, racism against our Peoples, and colonization. To quote the campaign: “It was never in our culture to do violence to the women and children in our families and communities; it was always our responsibility to protect them.”

I am pleased that NWAC has joined this organization, through a memorandum of understanding, to work together to end the violence. In my remarks on February 9, when we signed the MOU, I said, “It is time for Indigenous men, and all other men in Canada, to stand up, to call each other out for abusive behaviours, to look inside their hearts and examine their own actions, and to take responsibility for protecting those of us who are under threat.” We also took part in the [2021 Moose Hide Campaign](#) on February 11.



(Moosehide Campaign Virtual Screenshot)

Promoting traditional arts and crafts

Through our Makers Space workshops, the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) is helping to reinvigorate and promote traditional arts and crafts. This month, I hosted two very popular workshops, one on ribbon skirt design and colouring, and the other on how to make porcupine quill chokers.

We invited 10-year-old Isabella Kulak and her mother, Lana, to be our guests in the ribbon skirt workshop. Isabella’s story on being reprimanded for wearing her ribbon skirt to school has captured people’s hearts across the country and around the world. You can read Isabella’s story in our newest [e-zine](#).



(Preparations for Quill-Making Workshops)

Media Interviews

I gave the following interviews:

- Northern BC Reporter
- CNN on the Cindy Gladue case
- Tyree on the need to reform the RCMP and police forces across the country to eradicate systemic racism
- CITY TV on the memorandum of understanding signed with the Moose Hide Campaign Development Society
- Tiawanese Media/TV on International Women's Day
- Global News on International Women's Day



(A bit of humor on Twitter: Bernie Sanders makes yet another appearance)



Native Women's
Association of Canada



L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

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