



NWAC

PRESIDENT'S

Report



FEB 2023

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February

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February was a busy month for the President's office. The month started off with a National apprenticeship Program (NAP) committee meeting. There was a second committee meeting on February 10th. This is an exciting opportunity for NWAC, and I am pleased to see the hard work of the committee members.

On February 2nd the groundhog saw his shadow – which, according to folklore, means there will be six

more weeks of winter. Hopefully the Parliament's timetable will align to make this a busy winter for Parliament. Of note is that Bill C-29, *National Council for Reconciliation Act* has not been referred to Senate's Standing Committee on Indigenous Peoples (APPA) but we expect to move soon.





Also on February 16, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada introduced a bill to amend the Criminal Code to establish an independent commission to review, investigate, and decide which criminal cases should be returned to the justice system due to a potential miscarriage of justice. I was pleased to hear there will be a process put in place to safeguard against miscarriages of justice.

The executive met on February 6th to discuss outstanding issues. It was a pleasure to connect.



Meeting with New Zealand High Commissioner - Martin Harvey





On February 9, 2023, my interim adviser, Lisa Smith testified before the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs regarding the application of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (UNDRIP) in Australia. The committee asked for insight into how other countries and Indigenous Peoples are engaging with each other to implement UNDRIP and improve adherence to UNDRIP principles. Lisa advised the Committee about Bill C-15, *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and that Canadians are eagerly waiting to see Canada's draft action plan which has been promised to be released to the public by early March.

On February 10, I spoke with the *Globe and Mail* about the slow pace of Ottawa's spending on the \$724.1-million investment meant to support Indigenous women and children facing violence. I am very concerned about the government dragging their feet to the detriment of our people. Access to culturally appropriate shelters is a must.

**UNITED NATIONS
DECLARATION ON
THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES**





Minister Marc Miller, Crown-Indigenous Relations called prior to the interview to respond to an NWAC tweet asking for him to make the two-million-dollar agreement with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) public. He did reassure me that he will release the contract because he does value transparency.

Lisa and I travelled to Ottawa for the week of February 13 – 17. We stacked high-level meetings. The first meeting was with Minister Miller at his office. It was a productive meeting. I lobbied for an increase in core funding as well as enhanced core funding for Provincial Territorial Membership Associations (PTMAs). I did receive pushback, but I will continue to lobby for the PTMA capacity and core and sustainable funding pursuant to Call for Justice 1.8. I took the opportunity to ask Miller for his help in securing a meeting with the Prime Minister since that is a broken promise under the Canada-NWAC accord. Miller did say he will try and facilitate that request, as best as he can.



Meeting with Minister Marc Miller



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On **Valentines day!** I did an interview with APTN's InFocus. They asked why is the Sisters in Spirit movement still essential and what needs to change with gender-based violence. I spoke from the heart and told them the harsh realities of our people. For example, I raised my concern about the overincarceration of Indigenous women and advocated for systemic change. On August 24, 2022, Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, signed an Indigenous Collaboration Arrangement between Canada and Aotearoa-New Zealand. The High-Commissioner was excited to share ways in which he believes we can work together under that agreement.

Later that day, we met with Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Christina Higgins from the United States (US) Embassy and her team. Counselor Higgins was excited to renew a relationship with NWAC. Her team also advised of potential grants that may be of interest for NWAC since it targets Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) that can strengthen Canada-US relations. They were excited to hear of Safe Passage and other initiatives that aid against human-trafficking.



Meeting with US Embassy (Ottawa) Counselor Christina Higgins



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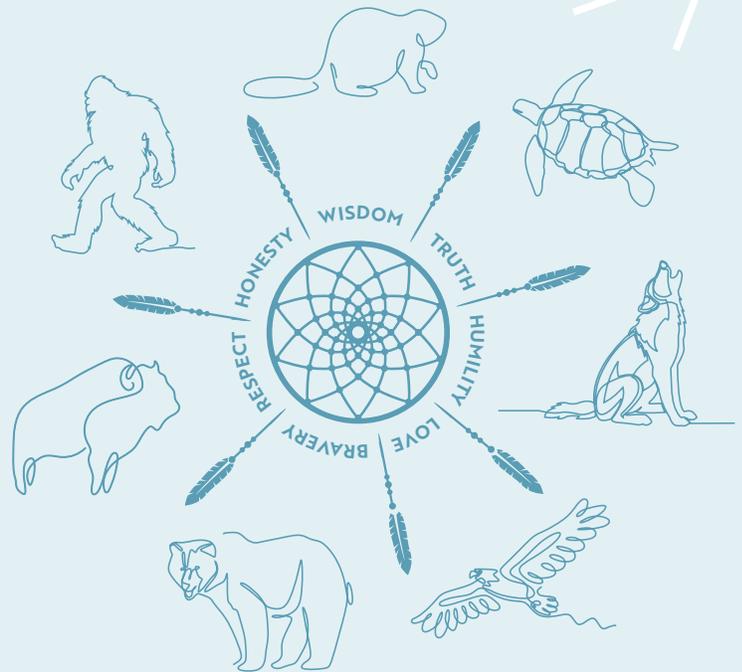
"February 15th marked a proud and joyful moment. We witnessed the installation of our NWAC sign at the Regional office on my First Nation, proudly displaying the NWAC logo. It was a happy day."

We ended the month strong. On Feb 28th, Lisa and I attended the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) Symposium: Uproot – Addressing colonialism." I was honoured to attend as Indigenous midwives are the keepers of ceremonies, leaders and mentors, and someone who passes on important values about health to the next generation.

Yours Sincerely,

Carol McBride

President





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