

Ontario Native Women's Association Response to the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry

Respectfully submitted by:

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Prepared for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs of Ontario
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is submitted to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Ontario Native Women's Association in regards to the Report and Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. The Ipperwash Inquiry was established to investigate events surrounding the shooting death of Dudley George, an Aboriginal man who was shot and killed by the Ontario Provincial Police during a peaceful protest at Ipperwash Park in 1995. This report is ONWA's response to the 100 recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. It is a compilation of the input over 65 Aboriginal women across Ontario who participated in one of the six consultations ONWA held throughout the province.

In this report, we utilizing the Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, developed by ONWA and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, to draw out foundational principles and strategic directions to apply to the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. Using this existing framework as it applies to Ipperwash, we subsequently highlight Principles of Positive Change. These Principles of Aboriginal Women's Involvement, Partnership, Commitment, Accountability, Communication, and Ethical Conduct address broader recommendations, values, and ideology that permeate the remainder of the document. Along with the Principles, ONWA's view of the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry are presented in areas of Education, Policing, Provincial Government, Federal Government, Land Claims and Natural Resources, and Burial and Heritage Sites.

It is unacceptable to continue to allow history to repeat itself. We are therefore determined to help bring about positive change.

Acknowledgement

The Ontario Native Women's Association would like to acknowledge the family of Dudley George and all of those in the community who have been affected by this tragedy. Our hearts are with you as we all work together to help bring about change.

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I. ONWA'S ROLE IN THE IPPERWASH INQUIRY:

The Ontario Native Women's Association would like to first thank the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for the opportunity to respond to the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. We are grateful for the funding provided to consult Aboriginal women across the province of Ontario and develop this document.

With this being said, we must also mention that we are very disappointed that the decision to consult the Ontario Native Women's Association was somewhat of an afterthought. ONWA was not contacted until an Aboriginal woman familiar with our organization was hired to work for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and stressed the need to consult Aboriginal women on this important issue.

The Ontario Native Women's Association has been present since the beginning. ONWA was contacted by Aboriginal women from Stoney and Kettle Point during the ordeal at Ipperwash in 1995 and is the point of contact for the concerns of Aboriginal women. Believing we wanted to be part of the solution, ONWA passed a resolution to contribute to funding for Dudley George's family to seek justice within the court system. ONWA is still determined to be part of the solution. We can bring to the table many ideas and expertise on how to foster positive change.

Other parties need to recognize the importance of involving Aboriginal women, represented by the Ontario Native Women's Association. If there is a true desire to move forward and bring about change, Aboriginal women **MUST** be involved. The traditional foundations of our Aboriginal communities are based on family values, and at the core of this foundation are our women. Mothers, grandmothers, and great grandmothers play an important part in providing wisdom, balance and, ultimately, foundation to our communities. Ignoring Aboriginal women will be detrimental to the success of any attempt to bring about positive change. Missing out on the opportunity to partner with and consult Aboriginal women may result in dire consequences in the implementation of the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry, including the development, evaluation, and revision of policies, programs, and projects.

Elected female Aboriginal officials should be considered in **ALL** negotiations and consultations. Just as the province recognizes elected members of First Nations governments, they must also recognize the elected women of the Ontario Native Women's Association. Members of the Board of Directors are democratically elected by Aboriginal women of the local affiliated groups both on and off-reserve across Ontario and strive to represent the interests of all Aboriginal women. ONWA desires to represent the voice of all Aboriginal women in Ontario and to empower them with a voice. Stakeholders **MUST** listen to this voice if they truly desire to bring about change.

Overview of the Ontario Native Women's Association:

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is a provincial organization that exists to create a forum through which Aboriginal women can effectively address the social, economic, health, justice, employment, and training issues that affect their lives and the lives of their families. ONWA was incorporated in 1971 with the goal of promoting the betterment and equality of Aboriginal Women. The main concern of the Association is the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal culture, language and heritage. Affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), ONWA represents Aboriginal Women in the province of Ontario, regardless of status or locality.

The Ontario Native Women's Association consists of 75 local volunteer organizations, located in communities both on and off-reserve, divided into four regions within Ontario (East, South, West, and North). The provincial body encourages the involvement of Aboriginal women at the socio-economic, recreational, cultural and political level.

ONWA is governed by a Board of Directors and Executive, elected every 3 years by ONWA's membership across the province. The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and twelve Directors strive to represent the views and work towards the best interests of Aboriginal women across the province. ONWA works to address a wide range of issues surrounding family violence, health, housing, employment, education, and justice.

Along with 75 local affiliated groups and Board of Directors, ONWA has nine operating sites across the province that focus on service-delivery. Our programs and services are geared to Aboriginal women and their families, and/or specified in each program's criteria, as set by various funding sources. The Ontario Native Women's Association's programs provide services, products, and supports to over 10,000 Ontario Aboriginal women over the course of a year.

II. OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT:

Beginning on September 4, 1995, women, men, and children of the Stoney Point First Nation occupied Ipperwash Provincial Park in protest of the continued refusal of the federal and provincial governments to return the Stoney Point Reserve and surrounding traditional lands. The land was taken in 1942 for use as a military training site, with the promise that it would be returned to the Aboriginal people after World War II. Over fifty years later, the reserve had still not been returned and the land was not being preserved or protected, which was especially disconcerting considering the existence of Aboriginal ancestral burial grounds on site.

Two days after the commencement of the occupation, a confrontation occurred outside the park between the Ontario Provincial Police and members of the Stoney Point First Nation. Anthony O'Brien George, known as Dudley George, was shot and killed by the police.

Eight years after the death of Dudley George, the provincial government established the Ipperwash Inquiry to investigate the circumstances surrounding the tragedy that occurred on September 6th, 1995. The Honourable Sidney B. Linden was appointed commissioner of the Inquiry and released his final, four-volume report in May 2007, which included a total of 100 recommendations.

About this report:

This document is a compilation of responses from over 65 Aboriginal women across the province of Ontario regarding the Report and Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. The responses were gathered during six consultations held by the Ontario Native Women's Association over February and March, 2008: a Leadership Forum with the Board of Directors of ONWA, four Regional Consultations with ONWA membership, and a consultation with ONWA program staff. The funding for the consultations and development of this document was provided by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs of Ontario.

MAA requested that ONWA identify recommendations relevant to our organization, preferred approach for collaboration with Ontario and Canada, and priorities for implementation. Of the 100 recommendations, there were many that Aboriginal women agreed with. In an ideal situation, we would like to see the majority of the recommendations implemented immediately, along with our accompanying suggestions. However, we understand the reality of the resources, policy structure, legislation, etc that hinder the ability to implement all of the recommendations at once.

In this document, we have prioritized our recommendations by highlighting in bold "**IMMEDIATE ACTION**" and "**PRIORITY ACTION**". The Immediate Actions are those which we believe can, and should, be put into practice immediately, as there are few barriers to their implementation and they have potential for great impact. Priority Actions are of a high priority, but may involve overcoming barriers to their implementation. ONWA would like to see both the Immediate Actions put in place instantaneously and the Priority Actions put into place as soon as possible. Other recommendations highlighted in bold are also considered of high relevance, and should be considered as seriously as the Immediate and Priority Actions, but do not hold the same urgency.

The Power of Words: language in the recommendations:

Language is powerful, and certain words have an ability to either build or burn bridges. Bearing in mind the seriousness of what occurred at Ipperwash, it is imperative that provincial government, MAA, OPP, Ministry of Education, and any one else who plans to implement the recommendations, carefully

consider the wording that is used. The wording of some of the recommendations may prevent the recommendation from being applied in the most effective manner.

A good example are the words “advising” and “consultation” as used in Volume 2, Recommendations 25 and 42. The words are used to describe the recommended interaction between the provincial government or OPP and the Aboriginal people. These words are not powerful enough. They should be replaced with words such as “partnership” and “mutual agreement”. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs requested that ONWA provide some information in this report as to how we expect partnership and collaboration to occur. We are pleased that MAA is interested in partnership, but must stress that true partnership does not involve one party advising the other. Partnership should be based on mutual agreement. Partnership will be discussed further as one of the Principles of Positive Action in a following section of this report.

Being inclusive: the definition of “Aboriginal”:

An important point of discussion when talking about the language of the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry, is the definition of “Aboriginal” and “First Nations”. Aboriginal people are recognized in the Canadian Constitution as Indians, Métis, and Inuit¹. It may also refer to those who self-identify as Aboriginal but are not considered status Indians (this includes the Métis and Inuit). Several of the Recommendations use the term “First Nations and Aboriginal”² and others use either “First Nations” or “Aboriginal”, the former of which excludes other Aboriginal people. The term “First Nations and Aboriginal” is redundant. First Nations people ARE Aboriginal. A larger concern arises when the term “First Nation” is used exclusively in a Recommendation. This can be interpreted to exclude Métis, Inuit, and First Nation people who are not considered Status Indians. To have the greatest impact, It is crucial that the recommendations are applied to the benefit of ALL Aboriginal people.

History Repeating Itself:

We must acknowledge the fact that Ipperwash was not an isolated event. Twelve years after the fact, there are still similar events occurring, all of which have potential for conflict to arise with consequences as devastating as Ipperwash. We must not forget Ardoch, Algonquin, Kahanwake, Grassy Narrows, Gustafson Lake, Anishinaabe Park, Caledonia, and, most recently, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, just to name a few. This list is a part of a history that has been plagued with false promises and paper resolutions. History has repeated itself, and will continue to repeat itself until the root systemic issues are addressed. The last consultation ONWA held on the Ipperwash Inquiry occurred shortly after the sentencing of members of the band council of the K.I. First Nation. Several women present at the consultation wondered if the situation with K.I. could turn into “another Ipperwash”.

If rightly applied, the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry have the potential to bring about change and ensure an event as tragic as the shooting of Dudley George never occurs again. There must be a commitment for change on behalf of all parties, otherwise the Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry will become another document that sits on the shelf as nothing but a reminder of time, energy, and millions of dollars wasted. We truly appreciate the demonstrated commitment of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and province of Ontario in funding the Ipperwash Inquiry and the responses of Aboriginal organizations. Our hope is that all professed commitment will be promptly translated into action.

¹ Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, sections 25 and 35

² See Vol 2, Recommendations 24, 25, 28, 37

III. UTILIZING AN EXISTING FRAMEWORK:

ONWA has committed to addressing the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and has developed a framework to determine steps of action. Over the past few years, violence has been a very strong focus of the Ontario Native Women's Association. Addressing the systemic issues that lead to violence against Aboriginal women is the only way to begin to address the matter. Not surprisingly, many of the changes that need to be made to reduce violence against Aboriginal women are also changes that may be applied to the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. As such, it makes sense to draw on our existing work on violence in order to help frame our recommendations for this report.

The Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women

The Ontario Native Women's Association and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres recently released a document entitled *The Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*. The Framework was developed from discussion during Parts I and II of the Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women (in March 2007 and September 2007, respectively), delivered in partnership with the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ministry of the Attorney General. The Framework discusses change necessary in communities, policies, and legislation. These changes need to occur both at the systemic and community level. Conversely, the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry revolve primarily around systemic change. Some of the strategies in the Framework may also be applied to the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry.

Four of the eight **Foundational Principles** of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women may be used as foundational principles to fuel change in regards to Ipperwash, namely:

- Acknowledgement that violence is rooted in systemic discrimination
- Government and Aboriginal coordination and collaboration must involve flexible, ongoing, evolving efforts.
- Changes in legislation, policy, education, and accountability are necessary
- Perpetrators (those who break the law or do not adhere to policy) must be held accountable. This speaks of accountability in general – everyone involved should be accountable and transparent, to ensure that the best efforts are being made to improve the treatment of Aboriginal land claims, occupations, and protests.

Along with these principles, the **Eight Strategic Directions** of the Framework may also be well applied to the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. The Strategic Directions are as follows:

1. Comprehensive Research and Data Collection
2. Legal Reform and Legislative Change
3. Comprehensive Policy
4. Sustained Policy and Program Infrastructure
5. Education Campaign
6. Community, Organizational, and Government Capacity
7. Community Leadership
8. Ensuring Accountability for a Broad Commitment

Details of the Foundational Principles and Strategic Directions will be applied throughout the remainder of this document. For more information on the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, contact the Ontario Native Women's Association and/or the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE CHANGE:

The following principles were developed from both the Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and ONWA's consultations across Ontario on the Ipperwash Inquiry. We believe these principles should be applied to all Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. Instead of stating the same six points again and again in each section of the report, we decided to highlight them as important principles that apply to ALL recommendations. To take it a step further, these principles can be applied universally to both thought and action in bringing about any change that involves Aboriginal communities. The following are ONWA's Principles of Positive Change for the Ipperwash Inquiry Report and Recommendations:

- ❖ Aboriginal Women involvement
- ❖ Partnership
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Ethical Conduct

Aboriginal Women's Involvement:

Aboriginal women must be involved at every level of consultation and partnership. As stated in the beginning of this document, women are the core foundations of our families and communities. After colonization, Aboriginal women lacked their important role in society for many years, which is one aspect that left a void in our communities. Please do not perpetuate this void by ignoring the voice of Aboriginal women. We are ready to step back into the roles the Creator ordained for us and take action to move our communities forward.

It is important to note that throughout this document when we refer to the involvement of Aboriginal women, we are referring specifically to the involvement of the Ontario Native Women's Association. ONWA represents the interests of Aboriginal women both on and off-reserve, working to advocate and address the issues that affect women and their families. Simply having an Aboriginal woman sit at a discussion table is not enough. That would be the same as having one citizen of an Aboriginal community at a discussion table. Just as one cannot assume the views of that particular individual are representative of the views of the entire community, (unless he/she is designated to be the liaison of that community), one cannot assume that the involvement of one Aboriginal woman meets the need of all women across Ontario. ONWA strives to represent the best interests of all Aboriginal women in the province, and should be the primary contact for Aboriginal women's involvement.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: Create and resource positions for Aboriginal women (ONWA) to participate on all relevant Ministry committees

Aboriginal women must be involved in the planning, policy, legislation, and program changes in order for these changes to be most effective.

Partnership:

In Volume 2, Recommendation #36 of the Inquiry, Honourable Sidney Linden states that the provincial government and MAA should develop a way to obtain input from Aboriginal communities³. One of the best ways to obtain this input is to form a strong partnership with Aboriginal organizations, based on trust and mutual commitment. There needs to be Aboriginal involvement and decision-making power in any reforms relating to Aboriginal issues.

Forming partnerships with Aboriginal women of ONWA and with other Aboriginal organizations is of the utmost importance. We are grateful that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs understands the integral role that partnership must play and have requested input from ONWA regarding preferred methods of collaboration and partnership.

Firstly, all partnerships must be based on mutual agreement and trust. Volume 2, Recommendation #42, states that *“the OPP should establish a formal consultation committee with major Aboriginal organizations in Ontario”*⁴. We agree that there needs to be communication between the police and Aboriginal organizations, however, it is necessary that this relationship goes beyond “consultation” and is thought of as more of a “partnership”. Aboriginal organizations and individuals have been consulted and researched incessantly. We believe that a true partnership will be more conducive to positive change and building positive relationships between the police and Aboriginal organizations and communities, as well as between the government and Aboriginal organizations and communities.

A true partnership involves all parties coming together to work for a common purpose and to meet each other’s needs. Advising and consulting are not part of a true partnership. These methods of obtaining and/or giving information certainly have their place in the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. However, they should not be mistaken for being a component of partnership.

True partnership involves Aboriginal organizations and/or communities being engaged in a meaningful way and having decision-making power. Providing input and information is not enough. We must be involved in the decisions being made and regarded as partners for change.

Working in partnership involves working on mutually agreeable timeframes. Last minute consultations are not characteristic of a true partnership and are not respectful of our time. We must mutually agree on appropriate timeframes and deadlines. Partnership involves reciprocal respect and commitment.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: Contact the Ontario Native Women’s Association and other Aboriginal organizations to start developing a partnership based on mutual agreement, communication, and trust.

It’s important when forming partnerships to understand that there may be more than one party who should be involved. For instance, in Volume 2, Recommendation #60, Linden states that *“the provincial government should work with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Services, and other First Nations in Ontario as appropriate to develop a ‘made in Ontario’ legislative or regulator framework for First Nation policing in Ontario...”* While ONWA does agree with this recommendation, we would like to stress that other First Nations and First Nation Police Services MUST be involved in the process. Partnerships and legislation/policy should be developed with all concerned parties and not isolated to the larger jurisdiction, organization, or police force. Recommendations that include

³ Vol 2, #36 “The provincial government and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs should create mechanisms for obtaining input from Aboriginal communities on planning, policy, legislation, and programs affecting Aboriginal interests”

⁴ Vol 2, #42

“The OPP should establish a formal consultation committee with major Aboriginal organizations in Ontario.”

statements of exclusivity, or that mention particular parties, should be modified to allow for involvement of all affected parties.

There are many benefits to developing true partnerships. Among them, is the ability to share knowledge and resources. Some of these Recommendations may seem daunting, but by partnering with the Ontario Native Women's Association and other Aboriginal organizations, it may be discovered that the knowledge to take the appropriate action already exists. To effectively bring about change, we need a collaborative response.

It is important to note that the structure of each partnership, including communication protocols, rules of engagement, etc, will be dependent on many factors, including the capacity of the organization/ community and the common goals of the partners.

Commitment:

Any true partnership must involve a strong commitment to the common purpose. If we desire to bring about change, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, ONWA, and all others involved must be committed to seeing the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry through to the end.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and provincial government should make a public statement of their commitment to Aboriginal people in Ontario and to implementing the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry to avoid the recurrence of an event as tragic as the death of Dudley George.

Demonstrating true commitment includes providing adequate, ongoing resources for collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, including ONWA. Aboriginal organizations and communities need to have the capacity to take part in collaboration and develop true partnerships with the provincial government, police services, etc. Since the resolution of issues and the development of policies which meet the needs of all parties will take time, there must be a commitment to providing ongoing funding – not on a year-by-year basis. ONWA, and other organizations, are able to respond to the issues and partner with the government inasmuch as they have the capacity to do so.

The Seven Generations teaching of Anishnaabe culture is important in understanding the commitment Aboriginal women have to their communities. We work to improve the world so that our actions will make life better for the next seven generations to come. We hope that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is also able to adopt this level of commitment to the Aboriginal people of Ontario in adopting the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry.

Accountability:

Genuine commitment includes measures of accountability. We are pleased with recommendations in the Ipperwash Inquiry that include the importance of accountability, such as the following:

Volume 2, #41

“The OPP should post all significant OPP and provincial government documents and policies regarding the policing of Aboriginal occupations and protests on the OPP website. The OPP should also prepare and distribute an annual report on the Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents.”

ONWA agrees strongly with this recommendation, but would like to see it extended beyond the OPP. The provincial and federal government should also post all significant policy regarding Aboriginal occupations and land claims, and distribute an annual report on the action being taken to help improve the situation, including what recommendations from the Ipperwash Inquiry have been adopted and are in the process of implementation. This accountability is necessary to ensure that progress is made and that the Ipperwash Inquiry does not end up being just another expensive inquiry that produced a report that sits on the shelf.

PRIORITY ACTION: ONWA requests that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to release a public report stating which Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry have been implemented by the provincial government and which ones will be implemented in the future. Future plans for action must include reasonable timelines. Reporting of this nature must continue to occur on an annual basis.

The Ontario Native Women's Association would like to know what recommendations have been implemented and which ones the MAA and other ministries plan to put into place. We are aware that you have asked for submissions from several parties regarding the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. ONWA would like to hear back from MAA as to what recommendations will be implemented and the timelines for implementation. To ensure that the recommendations are applied effectively, we would like to hear back from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and all other Ministries implicated in the Ipperwash Inquiry (Education, MNR, etc) as to the action being taken. We would like to request a report outlining the recommendations that will be adopted.

There must be accountability at all levels of leadership, including federal, provincial, and Aboriginal governments. Accountability mechanisms should be built-in to policy, such that independent evaluation occurs on a standard basis. Monitoring and reporting should include longitudinal evaluation, impact assessment, process, and performance assessments.

PRIORITY ACTION: In all new policies concerning Aboriginal people, mechanisms for accountability must be built in, including regular, independent evaluation by Aboriginal people. Existing policies must be evaluated and accountability mechanisms should be worked into the structure of those policies.

Transparency should be built in to all areas of government for maximum accountability. This includes transparency in government and inter-ministerial meetings, police action, etc. The fact that much of the Ipperwash Inquiry was spent on determining what occurred during the "Dining Room Meeting" before Dudley George was killed shows that there is a current shortfall in accountability in government.

True accountability includes admitting to any wrongdoing. There is great value in saying "sorry". The Ontario Provincial Police, should apologize Cecil Bernard George, and to Dudley George's family and the people of the Kettle Point and Stoney Point First Nations.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: For the Ontario Provincial Police to issue a public apology to the family of Dudley George, and the residents of Kettle and Stoney Point First Nations.

Admitting to wrongdoing should be followed-up with appropriate discipline. This will be discussed further in the section on Police under ONWA's Priority Recommendations in this report. Further

investigation should be done within the OPP and officers should be appropriately disciplined, in accordance with the Police Services Act.

Communication:

Much of the tragedy that occurred at Ipperwash Provincial Park was the result of poor communication. The police didn't have a suitable strategy for communications with the Aboriginal people in the park and the Incident Commander based his decision to deploy the Tactical Response Unit and Crowd Management Unit on false information.

Listening is an important tool of prevention. The government didn't listen when they received letters from the Stoney Point First Nation. They didn't listen when the Aboriginal people said there was a burial site in the Army Camp. The police didn't attempt to listen during the protest or make an attempt to better understand WHY the people were there. The fact that many officers were unaware of the claims the Stoney Point people had on the land and that it was considered sacred ground shows the lack of communication.

Communication should be an underlying principle in ALL dealings with Aboriginal organizations and communities. We must work to understand the viewpoints of one another and engage in dialogue to bring about positive change.

Ethical Conduct:

Underlying all the principles mentioned above is the need to conduct oneself ethically and live in a good way. As Aboriginal women, we approach issues with a wholistic view, understanding that true wellness comes from a balance between the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life. All facets must be considered when attempting to bring about positive change. When implementing any changes or recommendations, we must consider the impact such changes may have on the bigger picture.

The Seven Grandfather teachings are Anishinaabe guidelines of how to live in a good way. The Seven teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Humility, and help us to live together in harmony with each other and the Creator. The Seven Grandfather teachings are a good way to conduct oneself in all areas of life, including working to implement the recommendations of the Ipperwash inquiry.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings:

Wisdom (Nbwaakaawin): To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people.

Love (Zaagidwin): Love must be unconditional. When people are weak they need love the most.

Respect (Mnaadendimowin): Have respect for all that is. All of creation should be treated with respect. You must give respect if you wish to be respected.

Courage (Aakwade'ewin): To face a foe with integrity. To do what's right even when the consequences are unpleasant.

Honesty (Gwekwaadiziwin): Always be honest in word and action. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others.

Humility (Dbaadendiziwin): You are equal to others, but you are not better.

Truth (Debwewin): Speak the truth. Do not deceive yourself or others.

V. ONWA'S PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Out of all the recommendations and topics to discuss during ONWA's Ipperwash Inquiry consultations, Education and Training resounded as one of the top priorities. The Aboriginal women stated that the reason racism against Aboriginal people is so deeply ingrained, both within systems such as the government and police, and within the non-Aboriginal community as a whole, is due to ignorance. Much of what occurred at Ipperwash was the result of poor communication and lack of understanding of the Aboriginal culture, history of the area, and reasons for protest. Racism and discrimination is deeply rooted in society and will therefore take a serious commitment to change such a dominant world view.

As per the aforementioned Principles of Positive Change, this commitment must be supported by ongoing resources, and must be developed in true partnership with Aboriginal organizations and communities (including Aboriginal women, represented by the Ontario Native Women's Association). The Principle of Accountability must also be followed, meaning that existing policies surrounding education need to be evaluated to ensure they are meeting their purpose. This includes the Ministry of Education's Aboriginal Education Policy. Currently, ONWA is involved in gaining input from Aboriginal women to provide to the Ministry of Education regarding this policy.

The points discussed during the consultations regarding Education may be divided into three areas:

1. Education in the schools
2. Media and Public Education
3. Training

Education begins at birth and ceases only at death. Understanding this, many Aboriginal women stated that Aboriginal language and culture should be taught as early as daycare. Children need to be educated in the schools, and the learning cannot stop there – it must continue in the public arena with genuine commitment to changing any racist views held by Ontarians. Finally, prevalence discrimination and racism among individuals working in the system must be changed by changing the culture within the system through education and training.

Wherever possible, education and training should involve an opportunity for personal, hands-on experience. An example might include an Aboriginal woman going into a classroom to teach children about traditional medicines, or a police force visiting an Aboriginal community to receive cultural training. Experiential learning will yield greater results than learning from a textbook, especially when it comes to extinguishing racist attitudes.

All learning should also be supported with dialogue. There needs to be an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers, whether the learning is occurring in the classroom or as part of mandated training for government officials. Discrimination may arise from biased attitudes based on misinformation. These attitudes and misinformation must be promptly identified and corrected. An opportunity for dialogue is necessary in order to allow this to occur.

All Aboriginal education and training must be mandated. It must be mandatory for school boards, teachers, and students to partake in Aboriginal curriculum. Likewise, Aboriginal training for police, government, and others must be compulsory. If the option to partake or not is given, then the phenomenon of "preaching to the choir" will likely be encountered – those who actually need the education and training to influence racist attitudes will not be the ones who will choose to participate.

Education on Aboriginal people, history, culture, and perspective should be a positive experience for all those involved, and encourage integration and relationship-building between people of all groups and cultures.

Education in the Schools:

Following an Aboriginal wholistic model, education of children should involve the entire community. Families should be involved in learning and may have the opportunity to learn themselves through the education of their children. The children need to be taught in school the truth that we are all brothers and sisters, regardless of history or culture, and are all equally valuable in the eyes of the Creator.

ONWA agrees very strongly with Recommendation #31 contained in Volume 2 of the Inquiry: *“The Ministry of Education and Treaty Commission of Ontario should work with Aboriginal organizations, school boards, and teachers associations to develop appropriate, classroom-ready teaching tools and resources about Aboriginal history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, and related current events.”*

The Aboriginal component of the curriculum must be developed for all grades and be a compulsory, mandated part of the curriculum. Many changes must be made to the current curriculum in order to properly represent the history of Canada’s First Peoples and present the culture in an appropriate manner.

Standardized and localized curriculum:

Aboriginal women identified the ideal Aboriginal curriculum as consisting of two parts:

- A standardized curriculum used across the province teaching Aboriginal history, culture, and perspectives; and
- A localized segment of the curriculum to teach about the Aboriginal people living in the community and surrounding area.

The standardized curriculum should cover important points of the true history of Canada and the First Peoples of Canada. It is important that the standardized curriculum does not paint all Aboriginal people with the same brush, but rather, displays the colourful diversity that exists between and within cultures. There must be special attention paid to teaching students about all Aboriginal people: First Nation, Inuit, and Métis. It is imperative that the perspective of Aboriginal women is integrated into the curriculum, especially considering the Aboriginal community is traditionally structured around family and community. Aboriginal women must be involved in the development of the curriculum to help ensure the true culture of the community is captured.

Localized curricula must be developed by Aboriginal communities living in the area surrounding each school district. Of course, the development must be supported by adequate financial resources to the individuals and communities involved in curriculum development. This portion of the course should focus on educating students about Aboriginal communities in the area, including First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit, and urban Aboriginal populations.

The localized component of the curriculum should allow for opportunities for hands-on experience with Aboriginal people and culture. This may include Aboriginal women and/or Elders coming into the classroom, field trips out to an Aboriginal community, or visiting an Aboriginal organization, for example. School boards should develop good working relationships with the community to support these endeavors.

Cross-cultural alternative education models should be considered to help develop relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, as all students learn more about the Aboriginal culture, traditions, history, and perspectives.

The curriculum should also address current Aboriginal events, particularly those that have occurred in localized areas. Youth need to be taught the history of our forefathers, but also of the past 25 years, including relevant issues of our current time, including Ipperwash. Students should be taught about the treaties and understand what treaty governs the land upon which they live and how treaties are relevant to all Canadians – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Educating the educators:

Along with educating the children and youth, we need to educate the educators. The teachers providing the education need to receive cultural training themselves to ensure they represent the Aboriginal community fairly. Training should be ongoing for both teachers and school boards and officials. School boards must be particularly diligent in ensuring that discriminatory attitudes do not seep into the classroom via the teachers. Racism must not be tolerated in any form within our school system.

Aboriginal involvement:

Every school board should establish an Aboriginal Advisory Council to address issues surrounding Aboriginal curriculum, current events, training of educators, and concerns within the schools.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: For every school board in Ontario to establish an Aboriginal Advisory Council composed of Aboriginal people in the community who have authority to speak on Aboriginal issues in the schools.

Media and Public Education:

Currently, the average person in Ontario receives the bulk of his or her education on Aboriginal people through the media. This is a grave issue, as Aboriginal people are continuously misrepresented in the news, as the media tends to take a sensationalist, and often negative, viewpoint. There must be an assurance of adequate public education in the province so that supposed “knowledge” is not acquired from biased media reporting.

According to Volume 2, Recommendation #51:

“Federal, provincial, municipal, and First Nation governments should actively promote public education and community information about significant Aboriginal protests. The OPP should also actively promote public education and community information.”

The public education of communities and individuals is even more critical during a time of protest or occupation. People living in the region, especially those directly affected by the protest, need to be educated on the history, reasons for protest, and any other relevant concerns that have been brought forth by the Aboriginal people. All sides of the argument must be fairly presented. If people receive proper facts and are encouraged to develop a better understanding of the situation, it will be much easier to promote peace. Public knowledge and understanding of the historical context of issues such as Ipperwash will help to reduce the amount of misunderstandings that occur when incorrect or biased information is released from the media.

Responding to protests and occupations should be part of a province-wide Aboriginal Media Strategy and Public Education Plan. Education of events should come in the form of official statements from the

federal and provincial governments, Aboriginal organizations, and First Nation governments. The media cannot be left responsible for educating the community with biased and/or uninformed reporting. The governments stated above need to be proactive in their stance and commit to informing the community of the issues at hand.

Launching a public education campaign to teach Ontarians about the history, culture, and current issues of Aboriginal people should be considered a high priority. Public education is required to help address the myths that exist about Aboriginal people and increase respect and sisterhood.

PRIORITY ACTION: Launch a public education campaign, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations such as ONWA, to teach Ontarians about the true history and culture of Aboriginal people and to directly address myths and racism that currently exist in society.

Public education may occur across many different mediums. Some women at the consultations suggested commercials and public service announcements on Aboriginal Heritage and History to help instill pride in the culture. In the day and age of technology, the internet must be considered, especially when reaching out to youth. Websites such as Myspace, Facebook, and others, provide a forum to help encourage positive relationships. Due to abuse, bullying, and racism that sometimes occur between youth on these sites, it is important to be diligent and wise with the representation of any material.

A woman in the Sault Ste. Marie consultation mentioned that Sioux Lookout holds an Anti-racism week every year. During the week of building positive relationships and cultural awareness, there is an opportunity to educate the public through public forums. These forums may be general in nature, or educate people on a specific issue in the community. The idea is to relay pertinent information and provide an opportunity for dialogue.

Education on government and legislation:

Along with public education and awareness about Aboriginal people, Aboriginal women identified the need to educate members of the community on politics, including the political structure of federal, provincial, and First Nations governments. Even more important is public education on human rights and legislation that affects the Aboriginal community. People need to be educated on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Part of this education falls under the responsibility of the Treaty Commission of Ontario (assuming that it will be formed). Education relating to the TCO will be mentioned in the section on Land Claims and the TCO. All people in the province should be made aware of the treaties and history that impacts every person living in Ontario today.

ONWA agrees that there needs to be education regarding Treaties, Treaty relationships, and land claims in Ontario⁵. Any education regarding Treaties must be developed in collaboration with Aboriginal women. History of Aboriginal people and Treaties needs to include a perspective from the women, and cannot be just a male, political perspective. It is imperative that the teaching include information about how the Treaties affected the family and community. The Crown is under obligation to uphold the Treaties, and should increase public education and educate the community in order to maintain the Treaties.

⁵ Vol 2, #6 d)

“The TCO should be given a broad mandate to undertake public education about treaties, treaty relationships, and land claims in Ontario. The TCO should be given the specific authority to develop programs about treaty history designed to be part of the Ontario school curriculum.”

We agree that the provincial government should improve public education about its land claims policies (#9), however, we believe that the Federal government also has a responsibility to educate the public.

Training:

ONWA supports the education of Ministers and the Interministerial blockade committees in the areas listed in Recommendation #49 in Volume 2⁶. We believe it is necessary for all Ministers, Ministerial staff, provincial officials, civil servants, and anyone else involved to any extent in Aboriginal issues to be educated in these areas. Anyone involved in policy or action that affects Aboriginal people should be aware of Aboriginal history, cultural, issues, and perspectives. Ideally, all government officials and all employed by the Province will be made aware of Aboriginal issues.

ONWA believes that Judges, Ministries, and others involved in making decisions regarding Aboriginal people must complete cultural sensitivity training. They must be educated on issues of history, culture, land claims, and Treaties, as well as government responsibilities to Aboriginal people. They must understand the big picture to avoid taking several steps back on behalf of the Province of Ontario. All provincial Ministers should be required to read the Treaties so they understand the rights the province is meant to uphold.

Creating and sustaining effective, proactive leadership in all areas of government and organization through education, awareness, and training is a necessary step to moving forward. Mandatory Aboriginal Awareness/ Cultural Sensitivity/ Native Way training must occur in all areas. These areas include, but are not limited to:

- government officials
- civil servants
- police
- military
- correction services
- immigration

Standardized and localized:

As with the recommendations regarding the education in the school system, training should be both standardized across the province, and localized within the specific regions in which the training is taking place. This is particularly important for the OPP, for example. Police officer need to be educated on Aboriginal people, history, culture, and issues as a whole, but also need specialized training on the particular Aboriginal population in the area.

Hands-on training:

Learning should be acquired through hands-on experience and relationship-building wherever possible.

⁶ Vol 2, #49

“Interministerial ‘blockade’ committees should be organized carefully to ensure that they respect ministerial accountability. These committees should be briefed on the following matters:

- a) appropriate roles and responsibilities of police and government;
- b) existing provincial government and police peacekeeping policies;
- c) general aspects of police strategy and objectives when policing Aboriginal occupations and protests;
- d) the unique constitutional status of Aboriginal rights and claims, and the constitutional right of peaceful assembly; and
- e) the history, issues, and claims that may be in dispute

Relevant ministers, ministerial staff, and other senior provincial officials should also be briefed on these issues.”

Partnerships must be established with Aboriginal communities. Communities and/or individuals who provide or participate in the facilitation of training, must be fairly compensated for their time and effort.

The systemic racism that exists in government, police forces, and in our communities is a direct result of the lack of education of individuals. Our leaders of Canada, Ontario, our municipalities, our First Nations, and our representative organizations, must realize their responsibility to set the example and show zero tolerance to racism and all forms of discrimination. This example must be set from above in order to ensure maximum success of public education campaigns and education in the school system.

POLICE:

During ONWA's consultations on the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry, Aboriginal women expressed the most anger when discussing the Ontario Provincial Police and other police services. Many Aboriginal women had stories about police doing wrong unto them, their families, or their communities. Many of the stories were accompanied by tears from the storyteller, listeners, and even the consultant. Everyone was able to identify with the anger, sadness, and frustration that resulted from the police not respecting the community or culture.

As mentioned in the introduction of this document, Ipperwash was certainly not an isolated incident, and therefore should not be treated as such. There may have been only one officer who fired the shot that killed Dudley George, but it's an entire system that, in its shortcomings, has ultimately failed the Aboriginal community. The culture of the entire police force allowed for the conversations between intelligence officers laden with racist comments, the inappropriate deployment of the TRU and CMU, the shooting at unarmed Aboriginal occupiers, and the making of t-shirts and mugs with racist imagery. The culture and faulty policy and procedure of the OPP also led to officers raising over 1.5 million for Ken Deane's defense against charges of negligence causing death, holding an annual hockey tournament in his name, and his outrageous estimated million-dollar settlement package. This is shamefully offensive. At no point should anyone ever be rewarded for committing such a heinous act. Aboriginal women want to see justice – not reward for those who have done our people wrong.

Although there is much anger towards the police, we do not intend to focus on the negative. Instead, we must talk about the changes that need to be made. With this being said, we want the police and government to know that the wool cannot be pulled over our eyes. We are aware that the issues are systemic and will require a great commitment to change. Addressing any racist culture or policies existing within the police forces must involve the Principles of Positive Change. Commitment and partnership between all police forces (particularly the OPP/municipal and First Nations forces) is necessary to helping bring about peaceful resolutions. Accountability is of great importance, and special attention needs to be paid to reporting, evaluation of existing framework, and consequences for racist, or otherwise inappropriate, action. Aboriginal women must be involved in the evaluation of policy. Underlying all of these principles is the final Principle of Positive Change – Ethical Conduct. For all the wrong that has been done to the Aboriginal community, Police services have a weighty responsibility to do all they can to fix the situation at hand and conduct themselves ethically – both as individuals and as a system.

Training: Changing the culture of the police force

The culture within the police force needs to change such that any forms of racism or discrimination are seen as unacceptable. The culture and mind-set of officers must change and there needs to be regular reminders to treat all people with respect, regardless of race, status, family name, or even previous offenses. The police are there to protect the community, including protecting the rights of individuals in

that community. Aboriginal people have the same rights as non-Aboriginal people, but are often treated with less respect.

Police need to receive proper education and training on Aboriginal history and culture. Training must be mandatory and on-going. In fact, the training should be integrated into police training from the beginning, with a prominent component in Police College and even cadet training.

The discussion from the previous section on Education and Training applies to police training as well. The curriculum needs to be developed by Aboriginal communities and organizations, including the Ontario Native Women's Association. Curriculum should be both standardized across the province, and localized to individual regions. Furthermore, whenever an officer is transferred from one region to another, she/he must undergo the Aboriginal cultural training for that new area.

Ideally, training should occur in the community - on-reserve, in an Aboriginal organization, or at a Friendship Centre, for example. Personal experiences with Aboriginal people, community, and culture will help to bridge the gap between the police and people.

We need to get police to be a part of our community in a positive manner. They need to restore themselves as a positive presence. Most Aboriginal women at the consultation stated that they would not encourage their children to go to a police officer if in trouble. The dangerous "us versus them" mentality does not make us feel as though police officers are there to protect our rights or can be trusted with our children.

There need to be opportunity for police to interact with our children and the rest of our community to develop a common ground. Police coming into the Aboriginal community for training or to develop partnerships with youth will give children a chance to view the police in a different atmosphere. Police-youth workshops can bridge the gap. The police should do a survey on best practices to help develop their training.

Developing relationships with the youth in our communities will help encourage some kids to become police officers. There certainly needs to be more Aboriginal representation on the force. We believe there is a need specifically for female Aboriginal officers.

Peace keeping:

First of all, we must highlight the importance of safety and well-being of women and children. Aboriginal women believe the Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry did not pay enough attention to the fact that women and children were present and the occupation was intended to be like a family camping trip. It is unacceptable to have a risk of injury or death to women or children during Aboriginal occupations or crises. Women and their families need to have an option to evacuate and get out of the situation safely if they choose. This is a human rights issue – the fundamental rights of the woman and child must be guarded.

Volume 2, Recommendation 38 states that:

"Police services in Ontario should promote peacekeeping by adopting the following objectives when policing Aboriginal occupations and protests:

- a) Minimize the risk of violence at occupations and protests*
- b) Preserve and restore public order*
- c) Facilitate the exercise of constitutionally protected rights*
- d) Remain neutral as to the underlying grievance.*

Remaining neutral and facilitating the exercise of constitutionally protected rights does not leave room

for an “us versus them” approach. The police must work WITH the Aboriginal community to serve the people of Ontario well.

Partnership:

If First Nations police services and/or Aboriginal units take the lead during occupations, the objectives may be achieved more easily, simply on the basis of positive communication with Aboriginal occupiers that may be fostered by First Nations police services and Aboriginal officers. There needs to be a sense that the police are there to “serve and protect” the rights of all involved, including the right to protest and the right to peaceful assembly.

First Nations Police Forces should take the lead during Aboriginal protests or occupations if it is within their jurisdiction. First Nation police officers cannot be seen as second-class to the OPP or municipal officers, as is the case in some regions of the province. There needs to be joint training and relationship-building initiatives to develop the relationship between First Nation police forces, the OPP, and other Police services in the area. We believe it would be beneficial for the OPP and City police to receive training from Aboriginal police officers and First Nations police services, whenever possible.

The Aboriginal units should be taught to deal effectively with Aboriginal civil disputes in a peaceful manner. However, all officers in all units must also receive training to manage situations effectively and appropriately. The TRU was not the most suitable unit to respond to the occupation at Ipperwash Provincial Park. The TRU have the “most offensive skill set” and are trained as an aggressive unit. ONWA believes all units of the OPP, including TRU and CMU, need training in peace-keeping and peace-making, along with cultural sensitivity training. Training should be undertaken in how to deescalate potentially violent situations.

Mediation and Negotiation:

There should be an Aboriginal-specific mediation strategy for the OPP and other police services that include the use of Aboriginal mediators/negotiators. All individuals involved in mediation need to be well-versed in the Aboriginal issues they are dealing with. Whenever possible, the mediators should be Aboriginal themselves.

The use of Aboriginal mediators must be worked into policies adopted by police services in Ontario, especially the utilization of Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal women during mediation. Elders and women will help to build trust and communication in the community and bring the perspective of both parties to a common ground of understanding. Aboriginal women in Ontario agree that there needs to be a list of negotiators and believe that ONWA must be consulted in the development of this list.

ONWA agrees with recommendation #47 regarding the use of injunctions at Aboriginal occupations and protests⁷. The purpose of the injunctions should be to promote peacekeeping, and an injunction should be used only if there is substantial concern of the safety of the community and residents in the area.

Liaising with Aboriginal organizations and communities:

There needs to be development of communication and partnership between the police and Aboriginal organizations. ONWA was recently contacted by a member of the Aboriginal Issues Unit of the Ontario Provincial Police. Officer Greg Moore called to explain his position and set up a time to meet. He stated clearly that his objectives would be effectively met only by partnership with Aboriginal organizations.

⁷ Vol 2 #47

He was very eager to start getting to know ONWA better and establish a good working relationship.

We were pleased to be contacted by Greg Moore, but acknowledge that trust and relationship will have to develop over a period of time. We need to know that the partnership and commitment to Aboriginal women is genuine. Members of ONWA's Board were involved with a protest on highway 11/17 on National Aboriginal Day that the Ontario Provincial Police were notified about. Police were in attendance at all the meetings and took notes during their discussions of closing the highway for a couple of hours. Everything seemed to be under the guise of "partnership", but the tone quickly changed the day of the protest and some of the Aboriginal protesters feared arrest.

As per the Principles of Positive Change, there needs to be genuine partnership and true commitment. Police officers and units who wish to partner with Aboriginal organizations and communities must realize that they are ultimately working for that community. There cannot be an "us versus them" mentality if we are to be successful partners.

Policy and Evaluation:

The OPP Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents is a good step towards helping the OPP police Aboriginal occupations and protests effectively. ONWA believes that all policy should reflect the need to promote peacekeeping and focus on non-violent resolution. However, any new or existing policy must be evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. Thus, we support the recommendations that request the OPP commission and publish independent evaluations of the Framework for Police Preparedness for Aboriginal Critical Incidents and the Aboriginal Relations Team program⁸. Aboriginal women must be involved in the evaluation of the Framework and relevant policies/programs.

Accountability and Consequences:

The police must remain completely accountable to the people they serve. Therefore, there should be reports for everything that may have the potential to violate the rights of the people they serve. ONWA supports full transparency through the recording of all phone calls and minutes of all meetings. We agree that Incident Commanders should continue to be accountable for keeping of accurate, detailed notes at the time of events⁹.

Accountability of individual officers should be increased by making it mandatory for the badge number to be visibly displayed at all times. Furthermore, people living in Ontario need to be aware of the police complaints process and the process needs to be accessible. There shouldn't be any barriers to submitting a complaint. For example, an Aboriginal person who cannot read or write English should be provided with a translator to properly document the complaint.

Anytime ANY sort of weapon is drawn, there needs to be a report. This includes tasers and batons. Significant damage can be done with these weapons. There are reports of individuals being killed by shocks from the supposedly harmless taser. Anytime a police officer believes there is reason to take out a weapon, it must be reported.

Accountability includes taking responsibility for one's actions. Although it was an individual who pulled the trigger and killed Dudley George, and individual officers who beat Cecil Bernard George, the OPP as a whole is responsible for these incidences. In order to begin building positive relationships with the Aboriginal community once again, it is necessary for the OPP to issue a public apology, in accordance with Hon. Linden's recommendation¹⁰.

⁸ Vol 2, #47

⁹ Vol 2, #4

¹⁰ Vol 2, #16

IMMEDIATE ACTION: For the OPP to publicly apologize to Cecil Bernard George via a press release and conference.

Furthermore, there must be proper discipline for the officers involved in the creation or purchase of mugs and t-shirts with derogatory, racist imagery, in accordance with any punishable offenses under the Police Services Act.

Punishments need to be appropriate. Suspension with pay is NOT an appropriate punishment. Forcing someone to leave the job and providing them with a large settlement and a transfer is NOT an appropriate disciplinary tactic either. They will not necessarily lead to a change in behaviour. In the case of Ken Deane, it validated his behaviour, so much so that his colleagues regarded him as a hero, raising money for his defense.

Appropriate discipline:

Police officers who commit racist offenses must be required to complete cultural sensitivity training. If they refuse or are unsuccessful in the training, they should be dismissed. Transferring an officer from one community to another will not solve the problem, but only spread it around.

Some Aboriginal women at the consultations stated that they would like to see the names of all police officers who are charged under the Police Services Act be posted on a public list. This would prevent an officer simply relocating, only to re-offend, and would also deter other officers from committing a racist action, word, or deed.

Culturally-specific dispute resolution techniques should be utilized wherever possible. In instances where there is a conflict between an Aboriginal individual or community and the police, a Sharing Circle would be a useful way of resolving the issue. Sharing circles should be the mandated tool of resolution and reconciliation between the Police and consenting Aboriginal communities. Sharing Circles help to foster partnership and build relationships. They have the potential to turn a negative incident into something positive and long-lasting.

GOVERNMENT:

At this point, we believe it is important to restate the Principles of Positive Change, instead of just referring to them as we have done in other sections. Here they are once again:

- ❖ Aboriginal Women involvement
- ❖ Partnership
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Ethical Conduct

Aboriginal women believe the provincial government failed the Aboriginal community. There were failings in every single one of the above Principles. They lacked in partnership and commitment with the Aboriginal people, unwilling to work towards resolving the land claims. They did not communicate their actions (or lack thereof) and accountability was brought into question with the lack of transparency in ministerial meetings. Overall, the province did not conduct itself in an ethical manner or meet their responsibilities to the people.

The province is greatly responsible for what occurred at Ipperwash. Ontario failed its people, and as a result, the people of Stoney and Kettle Point had to stand up for the rights the government refused to uphold. The same situation is occurring with the K.I. First Nation. It is unacceptable to allow history to repeat itself over and over.

Righting the wrongs:

Ontario has a responsibility to do everything possible to keep something like Ipperwash from happening again. There is also a need to correct all that was done wrong unto Dudley George's family community. The provincial government should provide the Stoney Point First Nation people with the proper supports to deal with the loss. Although 12 years have passed since the incident at Ipperwash Park, healing still needs to occur. The supports would have been most helpful immediately following the incident, but are just as important now if the government wants to show a commitment to fixing all that went wrong.

IMMEDIATE ACTION: For the provincial government to provide sufficient funding to the people of Kettle and Stoney Point to provide healing the community in areas that they identify as a need (counseling, relationship building with police, etc)

Communication:

As stated in the section on Education and Training, the government needs to develop a provincial media and communications strategy. This strategy must include official government press releases and correcting wrong information presented in the media regarding Aboriginal issues involving the province.

The government needs to recognize the leadership of PTO's and elected Aboriginal women of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

Legislative change:

As acknowledged in Hon. Linden's Report, various pieces of legislation may act as systemic barriers and contributing factors to violence. It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of federal, provincial, municipal, and Aboriginal government responses. Legislation that acts as a barrier must change in order to change the policies it affects. Respect for all humanity and for Aboriginal people should be reflected throughout all legislation. Relevant legislation should be independently reviewed, using an Aboriginal-specific analysis. An Aboriginal working group should be established to review legislation to identify ways it may contribute to issues such as Ipperwash. Culturally specific training for government officials, civil servants, judges, etc is necessary for the legislative change to have the appropriate, positive, effect.

Comprehensive policies must be developed to deal with issues surrounding the events at Ipperwash. An Aboriginal-specific strategy should be included in all provincial and federal policies. Aboriginal organizations, including the Ontario Native Women's Association, must be directly involved throughout the process of policy planning and development.

Ministerial and jurisdictional lines:

There must be inter-ministerial policy integration and coordination so that the change occurs across the board. Communication between ministries must improve, especially in regards to dealing with

Aboriginal land claims and protests. Change must also be inter-jurisdictional. Jurisdictional lines between the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada should not impede the processing of land claims, negotiations with natural resources, and issues that may arise as a result. The well-being of the people of Ontario must be put above concerns of whose jurisdiction the issue lies under. Provincial and federal ministries and departments must work together. Historically, neither the provincial government nor federal government has committed to moving forward in regards to Aboriginal land claims and Treaty rights issues. This may also be said of other issues affecting Canada's Indigenous people. There must be a commitment from both governments to work together to bring about the necessary change. Provincial and federal ministries and departments must work together.

Capacity and Funding

For all of the recommended changes, it is necessary for there to be a commitment of funding. Adequate fiscal resources must be dedicated on an ongoing basis to policy and programs undergoing development and/or change. This includes adequate funding for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Treaty Commission of Ontario, for example, to meet their respective, required mandates. Adequate, ongoing funding is also required for Aboriginal organizations, communities, and individuals involved in bringing about change.

The government should increase its staffing in order to effectively work with Aboriginal organizations and communities. The development and maintenance of positive, cooperative relationships should be a top priority. The government must dedicate resources to adequately staff Aboriginal policy and program positions and teams or divisions with Aboriginal people.

The same is true in regards to Aboriginal organizational capacity – there is a need for adequate and ongoing human and fiscal resources. There must be funding provisions for Aboriginal organizations to develop capacity in order to deal with issues and concerns such as Ipperwash. Resources need to be available for organizations to build capacity around partnership development. Increased capacity should be provided for the purposes of information sharing and knowledge transfer.

LAND CLAIMS AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

Aboriginal people have a great connection to their lands. As acknowledged in Hon. Linden's Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry, the Stoney Point people, like many other Aboriginal communities, believe that the Creator placed them on their traditional lands. Reclaiming their land was reclaiming their place in the world the Creator made. Land claims are not about the Aboriginal people believing they deserve more hand-outs. The truth is contrary to that ignorant belief. Following the 7 Grandfather Teachings, and particularly the ones of Respect and Humility, we are able to understand that the Creator has a place for us all – Aboriginal people making land claims are simply trying to reclaim their rightful place.

The Aboriginal perspective should be given top consideration in land claims, as the land is traditionally theirs. We must remember that the land was given to the Crown through the Treaty Agreements, with the Aboriginal people permitted to keep only a small portion of the land as a reserve.

The government is often reluctant provide appropriate compensation in land claims and natural resource issues, as it often involves a large amount of money. However, the costs of NOT settling land claims in a timely fashion can be much, much higher. Not engaging in meaningful, forward-moving discussion with the Stoney Point people resulted in a tragic loss for the community. Financially, it may be in the best interests of the government to be timely in the resolution of land claims. We must acknowledge that any land claim issue in Ontario has the potential to escalate to mirror the events of Ipperwash.

Treaty Commission of Ontario:

Canada's current backlog of more than 800 land claims is deplorable and the fact that it takes 13 years on average to process a claim is simply unacceptable¹¹.

In regards to Volume 2, Recommendations #2 and #4 discussing the formation of the Treaty Commission of Ontario (TCO), it is ONWA's recommendation that the TCO be spread wider than strictly Canada, Ontario, and First Nation governments. The TCO should include involvement from ONWA and other off-reserve Aboriginal organizations, such as the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Inuit. All Ontarians are affected by Treaties, and over half of Canada's Aboriginal population is now living off-reserve. If the TCO does not acknowledge the Treaty rights of off-reserve Aboriginal people, they are missing over half of the population. The TCO needs to cover Métis and Inuit populations, as well as First Nations.

It is necessary for the TCO to set up timelines in regards to how quickly land claims will be acknowledged and processed. There must be a goal as to the number of claims per year to be settled. All of this must be coupled with accountability to Aboriginal communities and appropriate follow-up.

Federal Specific Claims Action Plan:

On June 12, 2007, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a "Specific Claims Action Plan" to address the huge backlog of unresolved treaty claims that have caused division and conflict.

Canada's Specific Claims Action Plan proposes four key initiatives:

- Create a new tribunal staffed with impartial judges who would make final decisions on claims when negotiations fail;
- Make arrangements for financial compensation more transparent through dedicated funding for settlements in the amount of \$250 million a year for 10 years;
- Speed up processing of small claims and improve flexibility in the handling of large claims; and
- Refocus the existing Indian Specific Claims Commission to concentrate on dispute resolution.

ONWA recommends that the Treaty Commission of Ontario be established through discussion and consultation with the independent Specific Claims Tribunal. Through the Specific Claims Action Plan, Canada has made a commitment to help resolve land and treaty issues across the country; therefore, one may expect that the federal government will be willing to be involved with the Treaty Commission of Ontario. Enabling legislation for the Specific Claims Action Plan and Tribunal was supposed to be introduced in Fall 2007, but to our knowledge, it has yet to be developed.

PRIORITY ACTION: For the Provincial government to enter into discussion with the Federal government and Aboriginal organizations and communities, including ONWA, in regards to the Specific Claims Commission and Treaty Commission of Ontario.

The discussion over natural resources is best highlighted by the recent events with the K.I. First Nation. Mining can be incredibly damaging to the environment. Vested interest groups encroach on traditional territory, rape the land of all that is good, and then leave behind only a skeleton of what was once a rich

¹¹ From Prime Minister's Stephen Harper's speech on June 12, 2007, regarding the Specific Claims Action Plan.

landscape. The province must fulfill its duty to consult and accommodate, and Aboriginal people must be involved in all decisions regarding their land. In instances where the people do consent to the harvest of natural resources, a percentage of the profit should be given to the community. If the province truly wants to build self-sustaining communities, giving the communities a percentage of the profit obtained from their land is essential. Economic self-sufficiency will never be achieved if fairness is not granted.

BURIAL AND HERITAGE SITES:

Understanding the Aboriginal culture in respect to our connection to the land and our ancestors is essential when considering burial and heritage sites. In the same way that we, as Aboriginal people, are greatly connected to our traditional lands and to nature, we have an important attachment and connection with our ancestors. Traditional Aboriginal culture acknowledges that the spirit world is very real and that our ancestors are to be respected and, in some cultures, cared for even after death. Burial grounds are considered sacred. This is a very sensitive issue and must be managed with due care.

Aboriginal involvement:

We agree, in accordance with recommendation #23, that Aboriginal values should be acknowledged in regards to Aboriginal burial sites and the appeal process.

PRIORITY ACTION: Work Aboriginal values into all policy surrounding Aboriginal burial sites and the appeal process.

Volume 2, recommendation #22 states that parties must "... ensure that First Nations are aware of decisions affecting Aboriginal burial and heritage sites, and promote First Nations participation in decision-making...." Aboriginal people must be involved in decision-making from the beginning of any discussions regarding the burial sites of their ancestors. Seeking Aboriginal involvement in decisions should be mandatory, and no Aboriginal organization should be "made aware" of decisions affecting Aboriginal burial and heritage sites – they should be among the decision-makers!

IMMEDIATE ACTION: Involve nearby Aboriginal communities, including women and Elders, during any and all decisions regarding confirmed or potential burial sites of their ancestors. This must be supported with appropriate policy and legislation as soon as possible.

The people involved during decisions regarding burial sites must include Aboriginal community Elders and others with knowledge of the area. Anthropologists and archeologists should be among those who work with the community to determine the existence of burial grounds and appropriate action.

Volume 2, Recommendation #25 states that "*the provincial government, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, should determine the most effective means of advising First Nations and Aboriginal peoples on plans to excavate Aboriginal burial or heritage sites.*"

There is a serious problem with this recommendation, as it states that Aboriginal people should be "advised" about plans to excavate the remains of their ancestors, instead of being actively involved from the beginning of the decision process. Aboriginal communities, who may have a land claim or claim there is a burial site on land that is to be developed, should be contacted as soon as a developer voices interest in the land. Collaboration should occur from the get-go. There needs to be partnership and mutual agreement throughout the process to ensure the protection and respect of the remains of Aboriginal ancestors. If there is agreement that the remains may be moved so development can occur,

the Aboriginal community must be the ones to take the lead in relocating the remains and conducting the appropriate ceremonies out of respect of our ancestors.

In Canada, if a person purchases a building that is heritage-listed, he or she is not able to simply demolish or renovate the building. Any reconstruction or renovation must cease and be put on hold until a proper decision is made on the property and the alterations deemed acceptable. One would hope that if Canada holds such a high concern for buildings, that they will hold at least a minimum level of reverence toward the ancestors of the First Peoples of this country. Buildings are inanimate objects, whereas burial sites are imbued with cultural and spiritual values of the Aboriginal people of Canada. One would hope that the Canadian government and Ontario government would hold the burial sites of Aboriginal ancestors in at least the same level of respect that they hold inanimate objects, such as historic buildings.

If there is a claim of a burial site, or if remains are discovered during excavation and development, all development should stop immediately. Aboriginal people in the area should be involved in a partnership with the jurisdictional government and decide what must be done with the remains. Legislation must be amended to state that development must cease until the issue over the existence of a burial or heritage site is resolved.

Mapping of burial and heritage sites:

Ontario Native Women agree with Recommendation #26: *“The provincial government should encourage municipalities to develop and use archaeological master plans across the province”*.¹²

We would like to add that the Federal and provincial governments should do their best to ensure that the burial grounds are identified and that there are adequate resources and funding available for municipalities and Aboriginal communities to identify the sites. Saskatchewan has completed a similar project, funding municipalities and Aboriginal communities to map burial sites in the province. The result was a master plan of all burial sites in Saskatchewan.

The Aboriginal burial and heritage site advisory committee of the TCO should be involved in the process of surveying land and burial sites across Ontario.¹³

PRIORITY ACTION: In partnership with the Ontario Native Women’s Association and other Aboriginal organizations and communities, the provincial and federal governments should develop a map of all Aboriginal burial grounds and heritage sites across Ontario.

The mapping of Aboriginal burial and heritage sites in Ontario should be Aboriginally-driven and lead and should be in partnership with Aboriginal women. If the mapping is community-based, it will help to ensure that the proper history is gathered and the information is truly representative of the communities. Once again, Elders and professionals such as anthropologists, archeologists, and historians, need to be involved in this process.

¹² Vol 2, #26

¹³ Vol 2, #28

VI. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES AND IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY ACTION:

PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE CHANGE:

- ❖ Aboriginal Women involvement
- ❖ Partnership
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Accountability:
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Ethical Conduct

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- Create and resource positions for Aboriginal women (ONWA) to participate on all relevant Ministry committees
- Contact the Ontario Native Women's Association and other Aboriginal organizations to start developing a partnership based on mutual agreement, communication, and trust.
- The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and provincial government should make a public statement of their commitment to Aboriginal people in Ontario and to implementing the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry to avoid the recurrence of an event as tragic as the death of Dudley George.
- For the Ontario Provincial Police to issue a public apology to Cecil Bernard George, the family of Dudley George, and the residents of Kettle and Stoney Point First Nations via a press release and conference.
- For every school board in Ontario to establish an Aboriginal Advisory Council composed of Aboriginal people in the community who have authority to speak on Aboriginal issues in the schools.
- For the provincial government to provide sufficient funding to the people of Kettle and Stoney Point to provide healing the community in areas that they identify as a need (counseling, relationship building with police, etc)
- Involve nearby Aboriginal communities, including women and Elders, during any and all decisions regarding confirmed or potential burial sites of their ancestors. This must be supported with appropriate policy and legislation as soon as possible.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- ONWA requests that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to release a public report stating which Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry have been implemented by the provincial government and which ones will be implemented in the future. Future plans for action must include reasonable timelines. Reporting of this nature must continue to occur on an annual basis.
- In all new policies concerning Aboriginal people, mechanisms for accountability must be built in, including regular, independent evaluation by Aboriginal people. Existing policies must be evaluated and accountability mechanisms should be worked into the structure of those policies.

- Launch a public education campaign, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations such as ONWA, to teach Ontarians about the true history and culture of Aboriginal people and to directly address myths and racism that currently exist in society.
- For the Provincial government to enter into discussion with the Federal government and Aboriginal organizations and communities, including ONWA, in regards to the Specific Claims Commission and Treaty Commission of Ontario.
- Work Aboriginal values into all policy surrounding Aboriginal burial sites and the appeal process.
- In partnership with the Ontario Native Women's Association and other Aboriginal organizations and communities, the provincial and federal governments should develop a map of all Aboriginal burial grounds and heritage sites across Ontario.

VII. CONCLUSION:

This report is a compilation of the thoughts of over 65 Ontario Aboriginal women in regards to the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry. The responses gathered throughout the months of February and March, 2008, during consultations held by the Ontario Native Women's Association, gave us the insight to develop this official response. The Board of Directors consultation, four Regional consultations, and the ONWA staff consultation all provided information for this report. Many of the themes and recommendations were echoed from one consultation to the next, displaying continuity in what Aboriginal women deemed to be the most relevant recommendations.

Many of the Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry have incredible potential to bring about incredible change. However, policies and laws are only as powerful as the extent to which they are enforced. If there is not a true commitment to action, this document and the many others that have been written will merely represent futile efforts to make a difference.

Now that Recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry have been released and Aboriginal organizations have provided their input, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and all other implicated parties have a responsibility to respond. The Ontario Native Women's Association would like to hear back from MAA in regards to the recommendations that will be implemented and the time frames for implementation. We certainly understand the depth and breadth of the problems at hand – now is the time to act.

To have the greatest impact, systemic change must occur from the top while grassroots change occurs from the bottom. We're working at the community level to bring about change amongst Aboriginal women and their families – now MAA and other parties need to bring about change from the top.

The Ontario Native Women's Association acknowledges the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for making a commitment to gain input from ONWA and Aboriginal organizations. We hope that the commitment does not stop at consultation, but rather, carries on through until the end of systemic racial discrimination in this province.

While attempting to make changes, it must always be remembered that there are individuals, families, and communities at the receiving end of the consequences of policy. One of the women at our consultations observed that policies work in such a way that "someone must die in order for change to occur". Even then, change is not guaranteed. It is our prayer that Dudley George's death was not in vain.

