



## MANAGEMENT REPORT

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Meeting Date: December 12, 2017  
TO: VPL Board  
FROM: Christina de Castell, Director, Collections & Technology  
SUBJECT: **VPL 2020 Initiative 5.4 Truth and Reconciliation**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report provides priorities for 2018-2019 for Initiative 5.4 in the VPL Operating Plan, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action and a summary of activities since the November 2016 report.

### **PURPOSE**

This report is for information.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board receive this report for information.

### **POLICY**

VPL 2020 includes an initiative to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action under the Sharing & Collaboration outcome, and the City of Vancouver continues to be committed to action in this area as a City of Reconciliation. VPL began work related to the TRC Calls to Action in 2016, extending efforts that have been in place for many years.

This work aligns with VPL's core values of respecting diversity and social inclusion as expressed in the Library's Values and the Library's Diversity and Inclusion Statement, the latter last updated in 2010 (<http://www.vpl.ca/policy/diversity-and-inclusion-statement> ).

## **CHIEF LIBRARIAN COMMENTS**

VPL has a long history of connecting with local Indigenous community members because it is the right thing to do as a public library, and because our branches and work take place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Our plans captured in this report build on a foundation that we have established over many years of providing collections by Indigenous authors throughout our branches, offering programs like the Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence, and ongoing relationships with community organizations.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created in 2008 as part of the settlement agreement between the Federal Government, the churches, and survivor parties to the Indian Residential Schools Class Action Settlement Agreement to determine the truth about Canada's residential schools and establish a reconciliation process.

VPL staff's consideration of the TRC Calls to Action began almost immediately upon release of the Calls to Action in June of 2015. In January 2016, VPL staff presented a report to the Board – *Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action* – that described VPL's preliminary plans to respond to the TRC's Recommendations [[Link to report](#)], recognizing that further relationship building with the community was required before the library could fully understand the scope of action required. The preliminary VPL actions flowed from Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action related to Language and Culture (17); Professional Development and Training for Public Servants (57); Museums and Archives (69) and National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (78).

The January 2016 report identified that VPL has been seeking to build relationships with Aboriginal community organizations in Vancouver for many years and has been using a community-led approach to help us better understand the needs of Aboriginal community members and to develop responsive services. Activities have included program development and collection building, including the development of an Aboriginal collection profile and Aboriginal collections at Britannia, Carnegie, Hastings, Kensington and Mount Pleasant branches, as well as materials within general interest collections available at all locations. In 2017, we added a sixth branch Aboriginal collection with the opening of the náca?mat ct Strathcona branch.

In November 2016, the VPL Board received a [report](#) summarizing activities in 2016, which included:

- Implementing procedures to facilitate changing patron records to reflect reclaimed names.
- Participating in training to understand the impact of residential schools and colonization.
- Creating resource guides about residential schools and reconciliation for staff and the public.
- Updating collection profiles for Aboriginal materials that guide our selection.
- Continuing to offer the Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence program, which began in 2008.
- Encouraging use of the Inspiration Lab at Central Library to produce histories of Aboriginal experiences.
- Requesting that Library and Archives Canada review the Canadian Subject Headings representing Indigenous subjects.

In April 2017 the nácaʔmat ct Strathcona Branch opened and became the first major civic building in Vancouver to have an official Indigenous name, encompassing the idea of ‘we are one’ in the həńqəmiñəń (Musqueam) language.

When the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) formed in 2016, its first priority was establishing a Truth & Reconciliation Committee to advise libraries on how to respond to the Calls to Action. Manager Neighbourhood Services Megan Langley and Trustee Karen Hoffmann represented VPL on the committee and Megan Langley participated in the team analyzing the TRC calls to action. The committee recommended a set of actions on February 1, 2017 that the VPL Board [endorsed in July 2017](#). The full report of the CFLA Truth & Reconciliation Committee is available at <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/programs/truth-and-reconciliation/> (87 pages).

The July 2017 report to the Board specified that staff would deliver an action plan for 2018 and 2019 that considers the CFLA/FCAB committee’s recommendations and expands our commitment to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

## **DISCUSSION**

In 2017 we have undertaken the following work as part of the Truth & Reconciliation initiative:

- Continued to raise staff awareness of the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the legacy of residential schools and colonization through cultural competency sessions. We offered three training sessions in 2017, enabling 150 staff to participate in the three

hour program. In addition to staff trained in 2016, this brings the total number of staff at all classifications who have received training to 250. In addition, the staff Truth & Reconciliation committee continued to meet to discuss their work, share experiences and support VPL's ongoing efforts. VPL Board members received the same training in November 2017.

- Continued to build relationships with Indigenous community groups such as Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), Britannia Youth Matters committee, Aboriginal Mother Centre, Native Education College, and RISE (Responsible Indigenous Strategy for Empowerment), which is a collaboration between the Park Board and ALIVE (Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society).
- Continued to build on existing activities that promote Indigenous culture by offering programs such as the Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence and Indigenous Genealogy with Youth.
- Continued to develop, promote and update the staff intranet page "Reconciliation and VPL" to share information and discuss experiences.
- Updated collection profiles to incorporate feedback and established collection maintenance guidelines for Aboriginal materials.
- In August 2017, the VPL Board endorsed the Youth Matters "Pledge of Support and Guiding Principles of Youth Matters Community Accountability" committing to collaborate with community groups to support Indigenous youth in Vancouver.
- Organized VPL staff participation in the "Walk for Reconciliation" on September 24. More than 50 staff and VPL Board members joined the 50,000 people in Vancouver's second Walk for Reconciliation".

Staff will undertake the following activities in 2018 and 2019, in addition to continuing to build on our existing programs, services and relationships. Each activity is linked to a recommendation from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA).

1. **CFLA Recommendation #6:** Decolonize Libraries and Space by recognizing and supporting Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledges through culturally appropriate space planning, interior design, signage, art installations, territorial acknowledgements of geographic-specific traditional territories and public programming in collaboration with local Indigenous stakeholders.

***VPL Activities 2018-2019:***

- 1.1 Acknowledge the unceded homelands of the Coast Salish Nations by creating guidelines for staff and guests for oral acknowledgement at public and staff meetings and events,

visual acknowledgement in branches/at collections, and website and email acknowledgements by December 2018.

Our email acknowledgement language is “Vancouver Public Library acknowledges that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.”

1.2 Expand Indigenous collections to all VPL branches by December 2018, with ongoing renewal supported by the library’s annual materials budget.

1.3 Plan a destination space at Central Library, including collections, in consultation with urban Indigenous Peoples living in Vancouver, by December 2019.

1.4 Plan regular activities to celebrate National Aboriginal Day annually on June 21, beginning in 2018.

2. **CFLA Recommendation #7:** Enhance opportunities for Indigenous library, archival, and information professionals as well as the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies in the Canadian library and archives profession through culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment practices, professional and continuing education, and cross-cultural training in collaboration with local Indigenous stakeholders and partners;

***VPL Activities 2018-2019:***

2.1. Develop a practicum framework in consultation with Aboriginal education programs to increase opportunities for Aboriginal youth to be exposed to work in libraries by June 2019.

2.2. Continue to train staff in-person on the impacts of residential schools and colonization as part of core training, supplemented by City of Vancouver online training.

3. **CFLA Recommendation #8:** Establish an online database of “living documents” to highlight existing Best Practices of Indigenous Services in libraries, archives, and cultural memory institutions that will serve as a foundation to help disseminate those best practices and for this “living document” to be updated preferably on a quarterly basis but minimally semi-annually;

***VPL Activities 2018-2019:***

3.1. Establish approval process in 2017 to contribute VPL documents to the CFLA database and submit these documents to the database when it becomes available.

As part of operational activities, VPL will continue to offer programs related to Truth & Reconciliation. In 2018, this will include a film and dialogue series in partnership with UNESCO, the National Film Board of Canada, and Library and Archives Canada to promote dialogue about reconciliation. This film and dialogue series is currently scheduled to launch at VPL on February

21, 2018, curated by Jules Koostachin, VPL's 2017 Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence. Staff will seek opportunities to partner with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations for the curation and development of 3-4 additional film and dialogue events for this series in 2018.

In addition to the activities above, VPL will support recommendation #8 of the CFLA-FCAB committee to respect the Indigenous concept of copyright and advocate for changes to include protection of traditional knowledge as outlined and recommended by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) – Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (<http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/>) through the participation of Director, Collections & Technology, Christina de Castell on the CFLA-FCAB Copyright Committee.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The activities undertaken in 2017 were within the Library's operating budget or funded by the City of Vancouver as part of the City of Reconciliation initiative. We anticipate expanding Indigenous collections to all branches in 2018 within the annual operating budget.

Certain activities may require additional funding, such as visual acknowledgement and creating a destination space at Central Library. Staff will develop budgets for these activities following consultation.

### **TIMELINES**

Work on the initiatives described above will take place in 2018 and 2019, however, the services, programs, collections, partnerships and connections with community members are part of the Library's ongoing operations.

### **FINAL REMARKS**

As noted in our previous reports, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action represent one of the most important documents in Canada today. VPL's work in 2016 and 2017 has begun to contribute to addressing the calls to action. Staff are committed to work in this area and are looking forward to continuing to learn, build relationships, and increase their understanding and knowledge while facilitating efforts towards reconciliation in our communities.