



# huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

May 17, 2023

On August 3, 2022, Executive Council directed that an Inquiry Panel be convened to inquire into allegations of abuse of power, intimidation, harassment, assault, sexual harassment and sexual assault committed by members of government. One of the primary functions of the Inquiry Panel was to prepare a public report of its findings and recommendations as to: the identification of systemic issues, the development or amendment of legislation and policy, the provision of resources, training for staff and/or members of government, and community healing. The Inquiry Panel's report was finalized on May 15, 2023 and is now available to Huu-ay-aht citizens on the Huu-ay-aht website: <https://huyuayaht.org/hfn-inquiry-panel/>

Executive Council wishes to thank the Panel for its work. This has been an enormous and difficult task. The Panel's report will be invaluable for the Huu-ay-aht as we work to address these serious issues and their impacts on our Nation.

We recognize and acknowledge that sexual abuse and violence throughout Huu-ay-aht communities is a wide-spread and long-standing problem. As the Huu-ay-aht strive to promote self-reliance and empower and support Huu-ay-aht citizens and elders to reach their highest potential through lifelong nurturing, teaching, and healing, it is essential that we address these painful and harmful legacies of colonization, particularly on Huu-ay-aht women and children.

The Huu-ay-aht are in the campaign period for a general election right now. Executive Council is prohibited from acting during the campaign period except in an emergency or special circumstances. It would be detrimental to the Huu-ay-aht community for the report to be made public without a response from Executive Council, particularly in light of the Panel's comments about the damaging "culture of silence" that has existed in our community and its recommendation that "government members publicly acknowledge the extent of the long-standing problem of sexual abuse and violence in the community and pledge their commitment to addressing the issues, supporting those who speak out, dismantling the culture of silence and providing additional resources and supports for programs for victims, perpetrators and their families."

It would be inappropriate for us to commit the incoming Executive Council to any particular course of action at this time. However, we have directed that the Executive Director prepare a report on implementation of the Panel's recommendations to be provided to Executive Council following the election. It is our hope and intention that this will allow the incoming Council to make the best decisions for our Nation in respect of the Panel's recommendations.

We recognize that this statement and the release of the Inquiry Panel's Report will be difficult for our citizens. We encourage you to take care of yourselves and each other. Huu-ay-aht is available to provide services and to help you access resources:

Office: Anacla Government Office, 170 Nookemus Road, Anacla, B.C., V0R 1B0

Phone: 1.888.644.4555 | 250.728.3414 | Fax: 250.728.1222

Mail: Port Alberni Government Office, 4644 Adelaide Street, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 6N4 | Phone: 250.723.0100 | Fax: 250.723.4646



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1. Child and Family Wellness Department - 250-723-0100 (please call for individual support)
2. Cultural Support (Cory Howard Sr. and Mel Edwards) - 1-888-644-4555 or 250-723-0100
3. Culture Night will be at the Huu-ay-aht Port Alberni Government Office, Wednesday, May 17/23 – Brushings available 5-7:30 pm
4. Cultural Wellness Program (Quu’asa) – 250-724-3939
  - Lee Lucas and Howard Morris provide Cultural Support
  - For referrals, fill out referral form and email to Sanne Van Vlerken [sanne.vanvlerken@nuuchahnulth.org](mailto:sanne.vanvlerken@nuuchahnulth.org)
5. Kuu-us Crisis Line (24-hour support)
  - 250-723-4050 (Port Alberni)
  - 250-723-2040 (Port Alberni)
  - Toll Free 1-800-588-8717 (BC Wide)
  - Outside of BC, please contact the Crisis Line in your area
6. First Nations Health Authority – for counsellors covered by your First Nations Health Authority Benefits in your area, see <https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>

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