



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: December 4, 2018
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Meeting Date: December 12, 2018
TO: VPL Board
FROM: Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian
SUBJECT: VPL 2020 Initiative 5.4 Truth and Reconciliation

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of activities since the December 2017 report for Initiative 5.4 in the VPL Operating Plan, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action.

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'S COMMENTS

VPL has a long history of connecting with local Indigenous community members because our branches and work take place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam,

Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and we also believe that it is part of our role as a public library to participate in sharing the history, ideas and stories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Our activities in 2018 that are 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 Indigenous Storyteller in Residence since 2009, and our ongoing relationships with community organizations. This work is a continuous process of learning and reflection for us.

BACKGROUND

VPL uses the term Indigenous to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples in Canada.

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, recognizing that further relationship building with the Indigenous community in Vancouver 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).

In November 2016, the VPL Board received a [report](#) summarizing activities in 2016, including building community relationships, program development and collection building at six branches. In 2017, VPL opened the nécaʔmat ct Strathcona branch, in which the Board made the decision after community consultation to establish the first major civic building in Vancouver with a name in an Indigenous language.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) set as its first priority establishing a Truth & Reconciliation Committee to advise libraries on how to respond to the Calls to Action, and established a committee. Manager Neighbourhood Services Megan Langley and Trustee Karen Hoffmann represented VPL on the committee, which recommended actions 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).

In December 2017, the VPL Board received a report [\(link\)](#) summarizing activities in 2017, each linked to a recommendation from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA). These included continuing to raise staff awareness of

the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the legacy of residential schools and colonization with training that had reached 250 staff by the end of 2017; providing the same training for trustees in November 2017; establishing a staff Truth & Reconciliation committee; continuing to build community partnerships including with Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), Britannia Youth Matters committee, Aboriginal Mother Centre, Native Education College, and RISE (Responsible Indigenous Strategy for Empowerment); and continuing to build on existing activities.

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, and in September 2017, more than 50 staff and VPL Board members joined the 50,000 people who walked in Vancouver’s second Walk for Reconciliation.”

DISCUSSION

In 2018, we have continued to build on our existing programs, services and relationships, linked to recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA). This has included the following:

1. **CFLA Recommendation #6:** Decolonize Libraries and Space by recognizing and supporting Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledge 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 Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh 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.

- Launched our email acknowledgement language “Vancouver Public Library acknowledges that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.”
- Launched a “Truth and Reconciliation” page on vpl.ca in June 2018: <http://www.vpl.ca/truth-reconciliation> which informs the public about our work and links to the Board Reports on the TRC initiatives, as well as upcoming programs and book recommendations related to Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

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

- In June 2018, we launched our expanded print Indigenous collections, providing new collections for children and adults at all VPL branches that did not have designated collections, and enlarging the six existing collections. At the same time, VPL launched a collection of ebooks by and about Indigenous Peoples in Canada through OverDrive.

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

- Work on this initiative will begin in 2019, in conjunction with plans to revitalize Central Library.

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

- The Truth and Reconciliation Working group worked with Marketing and Communications to create templates for posters for National Indigenous History Month in June 2018. The working group also created a list of ideas of ways to celebrate the month in the branches and at Central. These resources were shared with Branch Heads and Assistant Managers. Discussion about how to celebrate in 2019 and subsequent years is now underway based on learning from 2018.
- The Readers Advisory Team created a book list for National Indigenous Peoples Day that included titles that reflect the impact of residential schools as well as the theme of reconciliation.

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 Indigenous education programs to increase opportunities for Indigenous youth to be exposed to work in libraries by December 2019 [was June 2019].

- VPL has formed a joint working group with members of CUPE 391 to discuss this framework and the members are undertaking research.

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.

- In person training session “Fire Across the Land” was provided on December 5, 2018 for full-time staff who have not yet had the training.

- VPL identified foundational understanding of Indigenous Peoples in Canada as core training for all staff, and approved that auxiliary and part-time staff could access the three one-hour online training sessions offered through the City of Vancouver.
 - Full time Children and Teen Services librarians dedicated time at each team meeting in 2018 to working through the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society’s “Indigenous Cultural Competency for Early Childhood Educators” training materials.
 - Children and Teen Services librarians attended Interlink training: Working Respectfully with Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives: Critical Indigenous Literacies Workshop for Children’s Librarians
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.
- VPL agreed that VPL documents would be approved by the Directors Group prior to being submitted to the database, when it becomes available. This will include the VPL collection profiles and weeding guidelines.

Programming & Learning Activities

Programming related to Indigenous experience and reconciliation is part of VPL’s regular programming. In 2018, VPL engaged over 1,500 community members at 69 programs for adults and seniors with a focus on Indigenous experience and reconciliation. These programs connected communities around Vancouver with Indigenous artists working in new digital media landscapes, opportunities to reflect on historic and present experiences to move forward with reconciliation, and celebrations of culture, arts, and achievements. Many programs also provided an intersectional connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous storytellers, artists, writers and other creators.

Branches held 47 events with some highlights being:

- 17 programs at neighbourhood branches by the 2018 Indigenous Storyteller in Residence, T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss, including tea and story sharing, mobile herbal lounge, Stanley Park nature and storytelling tour, slam poetry, and more;
- Britannia Branch’s monthly Elders Book Club - Indigenous Reads;
- Indigenous Genealogy for Youth Workers;

- Ten film screenings including documentaries such as *Our People Will Be Healed* and *Waseskun*, and the feature film *Indian Horse*;
- Indigenous artist exhibitions.

Central Library also hosted more than 20 events focused on Indigenous experience and reconciliation, including several events from the Indigenous Storyteller residency. Some highlights include:

- The national premier of the reconciliation dialogue series Let's Talk about Reconciliation, a partnership initiative initiated by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the National Film Board of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Indigenous Matters Committee, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and local libraries.
- The New Legends of Vancouver event at which renowned Stó:lō author Lee Maracle, Squamish storyteller William George, Squamish cultural practitioner Latash-Maurice Nahanee and Stó:lō storyteller Ronnie Dean Harris joined Historic Joy Kogawa House writer in residence Janet Marie Rogers as they shared contemporary histories of local First Nations territories and visions for the future.
- Writing and Book Camp featuring keynote speakers T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss and Julie Flett
- Indigenous genealogy workshops taught by staff from Library and Archives Canada.
- Events for the Aboriginal Electronic Music Festival (EMUSE) in partnership with Native Education College (NEC), including the festival's kick-off event and an event about Indigenous women creators of electronic music.
- An Inspiration Lab program, Storytelling in the Digital Age, which brought local Indigenous media artists to speak about how Indigenous storytelling practices have adapted in age of digital media.
- The launch event of former Indigenous Storyteller in residence (2017) Jules Koostachin's recent book of poetry.
- Several other events highlighting Indigenous music, author readings, history sharing, performances, and art.

In addition to the activities above, VPL continues to 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 Chief Librarian, Christina de Castell on the CFLA-FCAB Copyright Committee. In 2018, the Chief Librarian coordinated a joint working group with the CFLA Indigenous Matters Committee to draft the CFLA statement on

Indigenous Knowledge and the Copyright Act: http://cfla-fcab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CFLA-FCAB_Indigenous_knowledge_statement.pdf .

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Activities undertaken in 2018 were within the Library's operating budget, including the expansion of Indigenous collections to all branches. The Library received \$9,400 from the City of Vancouver as part of the City of Reconciliation initiative to fund the Let's Talk About Reconciliation Film Series.

There may be future activities that require additional funding, such as creating a destination space at Central Library. Staff will develop budgets for these activities following consultation. It is expected that funding for these activities will be from within the approved VPL Operating and Capital budgets. If, however, funding is not available from within these budgets, any request for funding from Reserves will be brought to the Board for approval.

TIMELINES

Work on the initiatives described above will continue in 2019. The services, programs, collections, partnerships and connections with community members are now 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 since 2016 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.