

INQUEST INTO THE DEATHS OF SEVEN FIRST NATIONS YOUTHS:

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**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS REPORT OF
THE THUNDER BAY POLICE SERVICE**

September, 2025

A. Overview

On June 28, 2016, the verdict in the Joint Inquest into the Deaths of Seven First Nations Youths in the City of Thunder Bay (“Joint Inquest”) was released along with 145 recommendations directed to various institutional parties. Of the 145 recommendations, approximately six (6) relate to policing matters and were directed to, among other institutions, the Thunder Bay Police Service (the “Service”). All of the recommendations that refer to the Service have been accepted. This Report is prepared pursuant to Recommendation 144 to provide an update on implementation status.

B. Recommendations Directed to All Parties

A number of recommendations arising out of the Joint Inquest are directed to all parties. The Service acknowledges and accepts these recommendations and reports as follows:

Recommendation 7 – Guiding Principles - Complete

This recommendation is accepted by the Service. Implementation is being guided by the statements contained in this recommendation.

Recommendation 143 – Annual Report on Implementation Status – Complete

This recommendation is accepted by the Service and this Report constitutes the Service’s Report thereunder.

Update 2023-2024:

The last report was submitted in September 2023, this submission constitutes the ongoing support of the annual reporting requirement.

Recommendation 144 – Process of Posting Annual Reports - Complete

The Service submits its report to the Coroner and also provides NAN with its completed yearly updates for publication on NAN's website. Further, the Service publishes its annual Inquest reports at www.thunderbaypolice.ca/reports

Recommendation 145 – Revise Policies and Procedures – Complete

The Service has completed its changes to policies and procedures. Any further changes, when identified, will be made during normal operational reviews and implemented as appropriate.

C. Recommendation involving Police and other Institutions

Recommendation 48 – Grade 8 Visit Program - Complete

The Grade 8 Visit Program ("Visit Program") was created and implemented proactively by the Service during the hearing phase of the Joint Inquest and prior to the release of the verdict and recommendations. While the recommendation obligation has been fulfilled the TBPS will continue the program indefinitely.

First Nations Visits:

June 2020 - 2021 - Ongoing

The in-person visits were postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Community Inclusion Team used the time to develop interactive presentations for future visits and for online engagement. Community Services Officers engaged youth locally through the Archery Program when restrictions were not in place.

The Community Inclusion Team including the School Resource Officers continued presentations online to students within our jurisdictions.

The Community Inclusion Team is also partnering with a media relations company and a youth mentor to create new content and anti-gang presentations to be used during engagement activities when COVID restrictions allow. Online engagement will begin in the fall if in person presentations are still restricted.

June 2021 – 2022 Update:

In July 2022 Community Outreach officers collaborated with the Canadian Military at the Canadian Junior Rangers summer program, Camp Loon, to deliver the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). The camp was held at Springwater Lake, 50 kilometers north of Geraldton. Between July 16 to 22nd 6-9 officers taught basic archery principles to 59 Junior Rangers from 17 First Nations, as well as instructors comprised of 22 Canadian Rangers, who are part-time reservists and 45 other military personnel.

Update 2022-2023:

In 2022, the Community Outreach officers and civilian staff collaborated with the Canadian Military at the Canadian Junior Rangers summer program, Camp Loon, to deliver the National Archery in the School Program (NASP). The camp was held at Springwater Lake, 50 kilometers north of Geraldton. In the summer months of 2022, officers taught basic archery principles to 59 Junior Rangers from 17 First Nations, as well as instructors comprised of 22 Canadian Rangers, who are part-time reservists and 45 other military personnel. In the evening, Officers ran a paintball range, which saw a large amount of participation.

In July of 2023, the Thunder Bay Police expanded its collaboration with the Canadian Ranger Group by participating in two separate activities. On this occasion Camp Loon was held in Nipissing, Ontario at the Spirit Point Wilderness Academy and Camp. Officers expanded their involvement with the 50 youth in attendance. In addition to instructing the NAPS archery program and running the paintball range, an Officer from the School Resource Office delivered presentations regarding bullying and online safety.

Also in July 2023, two Officers from the Community Outreach Office, in collaboration with the Canadian Rangers went on a 5 day canoe trip to Quetico Park. There were 16 youth from Northern communities that attended this trip. They were instructed in first aid, canoe tipping/recovery, Tarpology and fire making.

Update 2023-2024:

In December of 2023 TBPS was successful in its application for the Front-Line Policing Grant, which has a three-year term. Written into this grant was funding for a new anti-gang outreach presentation for youth. We are currently in the development stage and will be delivering the

final product to the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools, as well as a visit to one northern community.

In July of 2024 TBPS will be continuing its collaboration with the Canadian Ranger Group by participating in Camp Loon, which is being held in Nipissing, Ontario at the Spirit Point Wilderness Academy and Camp. This program continues to grow. In addition to delivering the archery program and paintball, Officers will be conducting daily presentations in regard to internet safety, to all participants.

Update 2024-2025:

This school year in conjunction with NAN and Matawa we have conducted 3 Visits to Northern Communities to provide presentations and engage with youth who will be coming to Thunder Bay for their schooling. In July we continued our collaboration with the Canadian Ranger Group by participating in Camp Loon which is again, being held in Nipissing, Ontario at the Spirit Point Wilderness Academy and Camp. Officers/Civilians will deliver the archery training/ paintball and will deliver daily presentations on internet safety.

Update (on Student Lists): June 2023 – 2024 - Ongoing

The TBPS is still waiting on whether each individual education authority will provide student lists. This year none were received. This has been furthered delayed by the ongoing COVID19 pandemic.

Update 2024-2025:

No update at this time, waiting on individual education authority to provide to us.

Update (on Ambassadors): June 2021 - 2022 - Ongoing

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on travel. However, NAN developed a workshop on Community Visit Protocols and the members of the TBPS Community Inclusion Team participated in the online training.

Update 2022-2023:

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, NAN developed a workshop of Community Visit Protocols and the members of the TBPS Community Inclusion team participated in the online training.

Update 2024-2025:

We have continued our work under the Community Safety Policing grant and have worked with a new presenter who attended TBay in September 2024 and presented an anti-gang/drug message to all of the Grade 8 classes as well as at Matawa and DFC. At the end of September 2025, we have a presenter visiting from Alberta presenting on Gangs, Drugs and Human Trafficking to all Grade 8 students, Lake Helen Public School. This is the last presentation under the grant.

Update (on Service/NAPS joint presentation): June 2020 - 2021 - Complete

As of October 2018, all NAPS officers have received the presentation from the Service's ALU officers, and our Safety Presentation video has now been sent to all NAPS detachments for them to use on a go forward basis within their respective communities.

Update 2022-2023 – Complete

As of October 2018, all NAPS officers have received the presentation from the Service's Aboriginal Liaison Unit (ALU) (now the Community Inclusion Team – CIT). Further, the TBPS Safety Presentation video has now been sent to all NAPS detachments for them to use on a go forward basis.

Within the coming year, work will be completed to determine if the video should be updated, and a new presentation provided. TBPS has created a series of videos in collaboration with Wali Shaw for our "Dear Self" project. They address issues of gang recruitment, drug use and human trafficking. These are to be provided to NAPS.

Recommendation 91 – Working Group – Substantially Complete but will be Ongoing

This recommendation was proposed jointly by the Service and other parties. It has been accepted by the Service and implementation is ongoing.

- **i. The need to ensure timely reporting to police of all missing person matters that involve a Student (In Progress).**

The Service can confirm that it is working with Matawa Learning Centre (“Matawa”), Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (“DFC”), Keewatinook Okimakanak (“KO”) and the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (“NNEC”) to prepare missing person protocols and contact information resources in an effort to synchronize policies and procedures among all on-call workers across different educational organizations.

- **ii. & iv. Public Awareness/Social Media Search (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **iii. Information Sheets (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **v. Press Releases (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **vi. Best Practices for Interviews (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **vii. & viii. Internal and Global Search Plans (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **ix. & x. Missing Person Risk Factors & Missing Person Questionnaire (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **xi. Training (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.

- **xii. Training Case Scenario (Complete).** No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.
- **xiii. Consultant (Complete).** The Service has hired an external consultant (Leisa Desmoulin) regarding TBPS training modules and curriculum covering cultural issues relevant to the Indigenous community, as part of a larger organizational change project. Since the time of the hiring of the consultant, many reviews have been conducted as it relates to cultural issues and the police relationship with Indigenous people. As a result, TBPS will review those reports and implement the necessary recommendations and report the progress to the Thunder Bay Police Services Board as well as the applicable oversight bodies (ie. Office of the Independent Police Review Director – now called Law Enforcement Complaint Agency – LECA).

June 2021 – 2022 Update:

The work contemplated has been completed with the Service implementing Diversity Reconciliation Training to all members of the Service. Five – 40 hour sessions and 124 members of the Service have received the training so far. The training will continue until all members of the Service, both sworn and civilian, have received it.

Update 2022-2023:

The work contemplated has been completed within the Service implementing Diversity Reconciliation Training to all members of the Service. At this time, nearly all members of the Service have completed the prescribed training.

Update 2023-2024:

The majority of Service members have been trained and there is one session scheduled for the fall for those that remain and for new hires. The full training will continue as required for new staff. Additionally, a shortened version of the training is being developed which will be included as part of the TBPS annual academic training days, beginning in the fall.

Update 2024-2025:

Ongoing, we will continue annually with the training.

Update (Overall): June 2023-2024

The Service continues to be in discussion with involved parties on an as needed basis to finalize outstanding items outlined in this recommendation or should any issues arise with the implementation of the recommendations.

Since June of 2023, the following has been accomplished by TBPS with respect to the missing persons procedure:

The procedure was extensively reworked which culminated in a January 24th, 2024 publication of a comprehensive update. Prior to publication, the procedure was reviewed in full by the OIPRD who shared very positive feedback. This resulted in the OIPRD declaring related outstanding Broken Trust recommendations to be satisfied. The procedure was lauded for specifically recognizing Indigenous youth new to Thunder Bay as being an ‘at risk’ portion of the community and for mandating immediate steps to address those risks. The procedure was also noted for specifically recognizing Indigenous Women and Girls as a vulnerable sector of the community as they relate to missing persons. This was the first of a number of planned ‘rolling updates’ as TBPS intends to continually assess and improve its missing persons procedures.

On February 06, 2024, a minor amendment was published to ensure TBPS member access to government forms related to Missing Persons. Community consultation also occurred with respect to the Missing Persons procedure. Understanding that responses may take time, the consults were requested following the January 24th publication so as not to further delay the first comprehensive update. TBPS shared the procedure with stakeholders of the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and Matawa Education and Care Centre. Both of those agencies provided positive reviews of the procedure. Suggestions made to improve the procedure were both considered and incorporated into an updated version which was published on May 23, 2024.

Of note, training packages are prepared for all newly published procedures. The purpose of this training is to supplement members' reading of the procedure with supervisor led training for a more fulsome discussion and understanding of what has changed.

Update (Overall): June 2024 – 2025

The TBPS is in the final stages of releasing the new Missing Persons Intake Form which will be utilized by all staff for missing persons. The new intake form standardizes all missing persons information for investigators. This procedure is expected to be fully implemented by mid September 2025.

The TBPS undertakes supervisor lead training packages for the missing persons procedures with newly hired staff on a continued basis and as a needed. This is continuously reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Update on Public Awareness/Social Media Campaign): Complete

No further update as recommendation was completed and reported on in previous yearly reports.

Recommendation 94 – Multilingual Joint Search Protocol – Complete:

Update: June 2020 - 2021

The Joint Search Protocol has been finalized and is now in circulation.

Recommendation 96 – Joint Task Force with LCBO to Deter Underage Drinking (Complete).

Update: June 2020 – 2021:

The “Runner Project Plan” at TBPS remains operational, when staffing complement permits.

Recommendation 97 – Public Campaign to Deter Second Party Purchases of Alcohol (Complete).

Recommendation 115 – Safety Audit of River Areas (Complete).

While the recommendation obligation has been satisfied the TBPS will continue to conduct safety audits of river areas on an ongoing permanent basis.

Riverway/Floodway Monitoring Project: The Service continues to monitor the identified highrisk areas, with daily foot patrols three times a day.

Data Collection from Reporting Mechanism: Patrols are still assigned to the Primary Response Branch officers to conduct twice a day in the high-risk areas. These patrols occur by officers either walking directly in the floodway area or driving their vehicles by on other occasions. The patrols allow officers to move individuals to move individuals away from the water especially when alcohol is present to reduce the risk of harm.

Statistical data that has been captured indicates the following:

In 2022, there was a total of 513 incidents listed as floodway occurrences which involved approximately 881 persons.

In 2023, there was a total of 379 incidents listed as floodway occurrences which involved approximately 629 persons.

In 2024, there was a total of 423 incidents listed as floodway occurrences which involved approximately 683 persons.