

Eva Media Release: Government Response to Inquest Recommendations Not Enough Says Violence Against Women Organization, Eva



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO INQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS NOT ENOUGH SAYS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ORGANIZATION, EVA

Last week, the Government of Ontario, the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner provided their responses to many of the 86 recommendations that formed part of the verdict in the June 2022 inquest into the September 22, 2015 deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County. The federal government and the Chief Firearms Officer have yet to provide their responses.

“We are very pleased to see that both the Chief Coroner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner have accepted the recommendations directed to their offices and, indeed, already have work underway to see those recommendations implemented. Communities will be safer, and survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) will be better served as a result,” say EVA Coordinator, JoAnne Brooks.

EVA also notes that there are some positive indicators in the response from the Government of Ontario, but says that it had hoped for more.

“In its response, the government has acknowledged the need for an all-of-government approach to properly address IPV. It has also indicated it will continue its work to identify ways to streamline funding and reporting requirements, which has the potential to relieve a considerable administrative burden faced by small organizations in rural communities.,” comments Lisa Oegema with Victims Services in Renfrew County.

However, the government's response does not address the significant gaps between official policy and what is happening on the ground in a number of key areas; in particular, in the area of perpetrator intervention.

"It's one thing to have the right policy in place; it's another to ensure it is being implemented in an effective way at the community level," says Erin Lee, Executive Director, Lanark Interval House (a neighbouring rural county).

"The inquest was an intense and difficult process for those of us who had already lived through the 2015 murders. We were moved and inspired by the courage of Malcom Warmerdam, whose mother was one of the victims and who was a party to the inquest, and by the commitment and vision of the five jurors. We had hoped the government would honour Carol, Anastasia, Nathalie and the inquest process by moving quickly to implement key recommendations such as declaring intimate partner violence to be an epidemic and establishing an implementation committee to ensure the comprehensive consideration of the recommendations from this inquest. The fact that it has not done so is a great disappointment," commented Faye Cassista of Victims Services.

"However, we are hopeful that the activism we have seen over at the grassroots level in rural communities over the past several months will ensure that, even if the province does not lead the way, these recommendations will be implemented communities across Ontario."

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