

Inclusivity Report:

Reconciliation and Diversity at the WDM



“Museums of various kinds, heritage sites and sacred spaces around the world, have, since their inception, been repositories of that which is valued by those who hold power in diverse societies.”

Viv Golding, “Museums and Truth: What, Whose, When and Why?” in *Museums and Truth*, ed. Annette B. Fromm, Viv Golding, and Per B. Rekdal (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2014): xiii.

“Museums and archives, as sites of public memory and national history, have a key role to play in national reconciliation. As publicly funded institutions, museums and archives in settler colonial states such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States have interpreted the past in ways that have excluded or marginalized Aboriginal peoples’ cultural perspectives and historical experience. Museums have traditionally been thought of as places where a nation’s history is presented in neutral, objective terms. Yet, as history that had formerly been silenced was revealed, it became evident that Canada’s museums had told only part of the story.”

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2015): 246.

“Spent an entire afternoon and learned a lot about early Prairie [sic] life. Was happy to see that there was some inclusion of aboriginal history but more in depth would have been better....”

Trip Advisor Review, Western Development Museum Saskatoon, left July 4, 2017.

“If you want to know history of European immigration to Saskatchewan that [sic] the perfect place to go. Of course, you won’t get more information about the treaty 6 because is [sic] just western history....”

Trip Advisor Review, Western Development Museum Saskatoon, left March 3, 2018.

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1.0 Executive Summary

The Inclusivity Report has three aims. First, to guide the Western Development Museum's (WDM) response to the Calls to Action in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Final Report.¹ Second, to guide the WDM's efforts in becoming a more inclusive and diverse organization that welcomes and shares the histories of all Saskatchewan people, especially those who have been, and continue to be, underrepresented in the Museum. And, finally, to decolonize the WDM's operations and programs and outline a process for doing so.

The central issue this report addresses is the need to work towards decolonization by weaving Indigenous, non-European Canadian and marginalized perspectives and stories throughout the institution. *Decolonization* is a complex term with an entire literature devoted to its study. It can be difficult to define. At its core, *Decolonization* for the WDM means to engage in a process of undoing colonial ways of being across all lines of Museum business.

The WDM is well within its mandate to bring forward non-settler stories from the margins of history. Bringing these stories forward is called *De-centering*. De-centering of the Euro-Canadian settlement narrative does not mean abandoning it. Rather, de-centering is an integral part of decolonizing, where settler stories of prominence are shifted away from the central focus so that marginalized stories can be brought forward.

Over the past year, the WDM Board of Directors have laid the groundwork for reconciliation, diversity and inclusion at the WDM. The adoption of the WDM's vision – A Saskatchewan where everyone belongs and histories matter; refining the WDM's Ends Statement to further define this vision; and adopting a Statement of Intent for reconciliation, provides the framework for the recommendations in this report.

This report recommends enhancing inclusivity and diversity throughout the WDM in all areas of operations, including governance, human resources, policy, education and public programming, collections, exhibits, gift shops, catering and event partnering. The seven main recommendations are:

1. Publicly acknowledge Indigenous peoples and their histories.
2. Provide training and educational opportunities for staff and volunteers including cultural awareness, anti-racism and sensitivity training to improve overall cultural competency.
3. Report on reconciliation and inclusivity activities and progress.
4. Assess collection management practices to ensure they support inclusivity and reconciliation.
5. Develop and implement a plan for exhibit renewal at all WDM locations to increase overall diversity and inclusivity in the stories being told.
6. Review, update and renew all education and public programs to ensure they align with reconciliation and inclusivity goals.
7. Review, update and renew overall WDM operations to align with reconciliation and inclusivity goals.

Launching decolonization processes can be undertaken immediately while developing inclusivity programs and moving closer to reconciliation. In fact, the WDM is already taking steps towards this, although initiatives are not being coordinated throughout the organization. There are many content changes that will help loosen the settler-colonial legacy on which the Museum was built. Staff and volunteers will also need to be supported through cultural competency and sensitivity training to keep pace with social change and provide exceptional service to visitors, members and other stakeholders.

Overall, this report contains the evidence and recommendations to guide the WDM in responding to the TRC Calls to Action and becoming a more inclusive and diverse organization. This work is important. The WDM's long-term sustainability is dependent on our ability to reflect all of Saskatchewan's people.

Diversity enriches our lives, but only if we make the effort to be inclusive and bring all our stories, good or bad, into our public spaces. Everyone deserves to feel like they belong – and belonging is seeing yourself reflected in the public institutions around you.

At the WDM, we are committed to inclusivity, one story at a time.

2.0 Acknowledgements

This report originated as part of a wider research project supervised by Dr. Keith Carlson, Professor, Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, entitled “Indigenizing Museums and Universities.”

A version of this report was prepared for the Diefenbaker Canada Centre (DCC) as part of the sub-project “Decolonizing and Increasing Inclusivity of Saskatchewan Museums and Universities,” an initiative between the WDM, the DCC and the University of Saskatchewan’s Community Engaged Collaboratorium in the summer of 2017.

The results of the project were shared on a panel entitled “Beyond the Museum Walls: Doing Community-engaged History in Partnership and with Universities” at the 2018 Canadian Museums Association (CMA) Annual Conference in Vancouver.²

Funding was provided by the Western Development Museum, the University of Saskatchewan and the Diefenbaker Canada Centre to hire Taylin Dosch.

Historical research methods were applied in the production of this report and all work is fully cited and referenced for further reading.

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3.0 Introduction and Background

The first section of this report explains how inclusivity and diversity are integral to the sustainability of the WDM. The Canadian museum sector is prioritizing inclusivity goals, guided in part by research and recommendations from the Canadian Museums Association (CMA). The WDM is not alone in its desire to decolonize its operations and programs and become more inclusive of the diverse populations it serves.

Contextual research is provided about the history of colonial museums to situate the WDM within the wider international framework of pioneer museums. Over many decades, settler-colonial museum narratives have marginalized non-settler stories, perpetuating inequity in Canadian society. Historians of Western Canada overwhelmingly no longer write histories that are celebratory of settler-colonialism; rather, the contributions settlers have made are now better understood to have been part of a larger system of colonization that benefitted settlers, marginalized Indigenous peoples and aimed to quickly assimilate non-British settlers.

Many of the recommendations in this report can be enacted immediately. For example, changing some exhibit titles; removing inappropriate content after the findings of the TRC revealed the devastating impacts of residential school on Indigenous peoples; and reviewing and revising exhibit labels, scripts and presentations for out-dated language or interpretations, do not require extensive resources to implement.

3.1 Decolonization

Decolonization is a complex term with an entire literature devoted to its study. It can be difficult to define. For the purposes of this report, *Decolonization* is used in its application towards history-writing and museum operations. The political definition of the term *Decolonization*, as it relates to the independence of formerly colonized nations, is not applicable in the context of the work of the Museum and will not be used in this report.³

Decolonization scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith helps connect the term *Decolonization* to the reclaiming of history by Indigenous groups: “Indigenous peoples have...mounted a critique of the way history is told from the perspective of the colonizers. At the same time, however, indigenous groups have argued that history is important for understanding the present and that reclaiming history is a critical and essential aspect of decolonization.”⁴

In a broader definition, *Decolonization* relates to redressing inequity in all aspects of life for Indigenous peoples, as well as many other ethnic, religious and cultural groups who were negatively impacted by the processes and structures of settler-colonialism in Canadian history up to the present day: “Decolonization refers to a process where a colonized people reclaim their traditional culture, redefine themselves as a people and reassert their distinct identity.”⁵

Beverly Jacobs, a Kanien'kehaka citizen, Bear Clan, member of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and a practicing lawyer and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor, defines *Decolonization* as this:

Decolonization means true partnerships, whether those partnerships are with Canada, with our non-Indigenous allies, between Indigenous men and women, or in all relationships. Decolonization means that we celebrate our resiliency in the face of an abusive relationship and choose different relationships that honour ourselves, our communities, our women and our lands.⁶

Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, President and CEO of the Abbe Museum in Maine calls on museum professionals and museum boards of directors to examine their colonized practices and propensity to continually create white spaces in their museum that are exclusionary. Her basic definition of a decolonized museum is one that is "...at a minimum, sharing governance structures and authority for the documentation and interpretation of Native [her term] culture."⁷

What *Decolonization* means for the WDM will be explored throughout this report, but at its core, it is a process of undoing colonial ways of being across all lines of Museum business.

3.2 Terminology

The Museums Association of Saskatchewan (MAS) booklet *The Importance of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples & the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Museums*, contains a guide on appropriate terminology for Saskatchewan museums.⁸ Over the years, certain words have fallen out of acceptable usage. MAS provides guidance on this: "It is critical to use relevant and appropriate terminology in all texts and exhibit materials.... Although many... terms are in common use, it is important to remember that these terms have been imposed by colonial administrators to describe Indigenous peoples in Canada."⁹ Words like "Indian," "pioneer," and "progress" are colonial and rooted in the narratives of settler superiority that underpinned colonization. The term "aboriginal" is now only sometimes appropriate.¹⁰ The terms *Indigenous*, *Settler*, and *Newcomer* are all defined by MAS as acceptable terms to use in museums.

The term *Indigenous* will be used in this report to describe the diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who live in what is now the nation of Canada. *Indigenous* is considered appropriate by Indigenous peoples themselves and has been used to describe the original peoples of a territory internationally (i.e. at the United Nations). However, best practice is, whenever possible, to use the name of the specific nation (i.e. Whitecap Dakota First Nation; or Métis Nation). It is also important to keep in mind there is no singular Indigenous voice and nations "seek to be autonomous from each other."¹¹

This report will use the term *Settler* to describe all non-Indigenous peoples who came to settle in Saskatchewan since the 1870s under Canada's settler-colonial systems of law and policy. MAS defines the term *Settler* as one,

used to describe groups of people who establish new communities as part of ‘settler colonialism.’ Their presence and rights are facilitated by the authority of the colonial administration usually to the extreme detriment of Indigenous populations. For example, immigrants from the Ukraine, known as Ukrainian Canadians, who immigrated to Saskatchewan because of the land and new opportunities, would be referred to as ‘settlers.’¹²

In this report, *Settler* is used broadly and refers not only to immigrants who came to Saskatchewan to claim a homestead and farm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but to all immigrants who came to Canada and what later became Saskatchewan in 1905. *Settlers* have come in many ways, for many purposes and from many different European and non-European countries over many decades up to and including today. *Settlers* are homesteaders, urban townspeople (like civil servants, professionals and merchants), refugees fleeing persecution, labourers (like railway builders, construction workers and domestic servants) and people who came to Canada for many other professions and reasons.

The use of the term *Newcomer* is used to describe more recently-arrived immigrants from all corners of the globe, regardless of the category of immigration that granted them entry into Canada (i.e. skilled worker, refugee, family sponsorship). *Newcomer* is an accepted term used in Saskatchewan and Canada to describe those more newly-arrived who have yet to apply for citizenship.¹³

The use of the term *LGBTQ2+* follows the draft guidelines outlined by the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) in 2018.¹⁴

3.3 Benefits of Inclusivity

Many organizations and institutions in Canada have recognized the benefits of being more inclusive and diverse in their operations. SaskCulture lists many reasons why inclusiveness is important and how organizations can “build inclusiveness” into their operations:

Why Inclusiveness is Important	How to Build Inclusiveness into Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support basic human rights; • Reach new audience/participant demographics; • Increase participation of Indigenous peoples; • Increase participation of newcomers; • Elimination of racism; • Increase critical thinking and innovation; • Increase focus on peace and harmony; • Build a talented workforce; • Build credibility through commitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess your organization; • Nurture a culturally diverse board; • Take the bias out of recruitment and hiring; • Build and maintain a culturally diverse workplace; • Ensure inclusive policies; • Learn about other cultures in your community; • Reach out to diverse groups • Work to end racism; • Evaluate your progress.¹⁵

3.4 Overview of the WDM

The WDM is the largest human history museum in Saskatchewan with a collection of over 75,000 artifacts ranging from pins to locomotives. With four locations in the province, the WDM shares Saskatchewan stories from the beginning of settlement to the present day. Each museum location focuses on different aspects of Saskatchewan History. Transportation in Moose Jaw, farm and rural life in North Battleford, 1910 Boomtown and innovation in Saskatoon and stories of immigration in Yorkton. The WDM's Corporate Office is in Saskatoon and oversees administrative and curatorial functions as well as collections storage.

Vision: A Saskatchewan where everyone belongs and histories matter.

Mission: The Western Development Museum is the keeper of Saskatchewan's collective heritage. The Museum shares the province's unique sense of place with all people for their understanding and enjoyment – recognizing that the legacy of the past is the foundation for a sustainable future.

Mandate (Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1978):

- a) to procure by gift, donation, devise, bequest or loan wherever possible, and by purchase where necessary and desirable, tools, machinery, implements, engines, devices and other goods and chattels of historical value and importance connected with the economic and cultural development of western Canada;
- b) to collect, arrange, catalogue, recondition, preserve and exhibit to the public, the tools, machinery, implements, engines, devices and other goods and chattels referred to in clause (a);
- c) to stimulate interest in the history of the economic and cultural development of western Canada;
- d) to cooperate with organizations having similar objects. R.S.S. 1965, c.400, s.11.

The WDM is a registered charity and was established in 1949 when the Saskatchewan Government passed *The Western Development Museum Act*. The museum is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan through an Order in Council.

At the time of this report, the WDM has 43 permanent full-time staff and 115 part-time and/or temporary staff. Staff responsibilities throughout the WDM are varied and include collections care and conservation, visitor services, gift shop sales, food services and catering, program development and delivery, fundraising, marketing, general and financial administration and management functions.

The WDM system is comprised of five separate facilities across the province with indoor exhibit spaces totalling approximately 20,000 meters squared. Since 1949, the WDM has grown to become a cultural facility of international repute and a major attraction in the province's tourism

industry. With an annual attendance averaging more than 200,000, the WDM is a significant heritage institution in Saskatchewan.

The WDM is committed to collecting a representation of the material evidence of Saskatchewan's human history, from the settlement period to the present. Artifacts made and/or used in the province are a priority. The Museum's extensive collection of agricultural machinery and transportation equipment has become indelibly linked with the WDM's national and international reputations. In addition, the collection contains a wide variety of household, business, and personal artifacts representative of Saskatchewan's history.

4.0 Understanding the Gaps: Museums and Inclusivity

4.1 Background and Context

The modern museum as we know it is a social, political and cultural construct dating back to 18th century Enlightenment in Europe. Jan Nederveen Pieterse defines this succinctly:

The identities that framed the age of the museum, from about 1840 to 1930, were national, imperial and modern. National identity was constructed in history museums and national art galleries (and military and war museums); imperial identities were produced in colonial and ethnographic museums and displays; while modern identities have been staged in world exhibitions, science and modern art museums. These Enlightenment subjectivities were in turn enframed by race, class and gender.¹⁶

Over the last two centuries, colonial museums in Britain and the "British World" (i.e. Britain's colonies, including Canada) often presented Indigenous artifacts as "ancient technologies" and used diminutive language, such as "primitive," to describe them.¹⁷ Essentially, Indigenous peoples were presented in museums as extinct or placed in a mythic past. These presentations served to justify colonization and normalize the atrocities of assimilation and genocide.¹⁸ In North American museums, narratives of "Manifest Destiny,"¹⁹ "Terra Nullius,"²⁰ and "Settler-Colonialism,"²¹ have long been employed as public expressions of colonial justification. These practices have contributed to racist thinking across the colonial and post-colonial world for decades.

Canadian museums descend from this historical and museological tradition and the WDM has not been immune to this phenomenon. In the *TRC Final Report*, redressing these issues is affirmed as key to reconciliation:

...non-Aboriginal children and youth need to comprehend how their own identities and family histories have been shaped by a version of Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples' history and experience. They need to know how notions of European superiority and Aboriginal inferiority have tainted mainstream society's ideas about, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal peoples in ways that have been profoundly disrespectful and damaging. They too

need to understand Canada's history as a settler society and how assimilation policies have affected Aboriginal peoples. This knowledge and understanding will lay the groundwork for establishing mutually respectful relationships.²²

In recent years, some Canadian museums have made significant efforts to decolonize, but others find it challenging to move beyond the settler-colonialism and pioneer nostalgia on which they are founded. An overview of these efforts is explored in section 4.3, entitled *Decolonization, Inclusivity and Reconciliation Efforts in the Canadian Heritage Sector*.

In Saskatchewan, the structure of the two provincial museums, the WDM and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM), is founded on the colonial division between “contact” and “pre-contact” periods of human history. This division is symptomatic of larger settler-colonial narratives that have informed history-teaching, policy-making and nation-building since Europeans first arrived in what would later become Canada. Andrea Eiding and Sarah York-Bertram have succinctly summarized this trope:

Colonization, settlement, and the creation of nation-states like [Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa] depend upon particular historical narratives that reinforce or justify settler occupation of Indigenous lands. These narratives seek to reinforce the idea that these lands “belong” to settlers and that settlers “belong” on this land. Therefore, the rewriting of history is a key part of settler colonialism. This often rests on an artificial temporal division that divides the location's history into two distinct periods: before and after settlement.²³

To remedy this artificial division, the WDM can work towards decolonization by weaving Indigenous, non-European-Canadian and marginalized perspectives and stories throughout the institution. The WDM is well within its mandate to produce histories exploring the connections between treaty-making and settlement in the 1870s and 1880s, for example.

Bringing forward non-settler stories from the margins is called *De-centering*. De-centering the Euro-Canadian settlement narrative does not mean abandoning it. Rather, de-centering is an integral part of decolonizing, where the settler stories of prominence are shifted outwards from the centre, allowing for stories that have lived in the margins to come forward. Ry Moran, Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, has recently explained why these stories are so important to our national health: “It's so powerful when we begin to listen to voices we have not been hearing in society, the voices of the people who are bearing the brunt of the unequal or unethical or unjust ways that our society is functioning.”²⁴

Recent research suggests that history education projects, including those in museums, that challenge settler-colonial paradigms, can promote understanding and empathy and reduce racism and oppression but only to a point.²⁵ Real reconciliation cannot occur without first addressing the deeply-held emotional attachments that settlers and settler-descendants retain about their history and their role in nation-building. This is in addition to correcting the

structural/institutional imbalances that the settler-colonial state continues to perpetuate in its laws and policies.

A group of six Canadian scholars have recently explained these emotional attachments as follows:

Canadians have a deep emotional and cultural investment in the status quo and are the beneficiaries of past and present injustices, particularly with respect to the occupation of Indigenous lands which settlers consider to be their own.... It will require a significant re-shaping of settler consciousness and the deep attachments that construct Canadian identities.²⁶

They go on to define “settler consciousness” as,

...the narratives, practices and collective Canadian identity that are based solidly in a foundation of national historical myths. These myths, and the attitudes and ideologies they engender, pervade all institutions and all spheres of society. Upon examination, it is easy to see them upheld and reproduced within the public education system, through the media, and in government policy.²⁷

Canadian pioneer museums have perpetuated settler consciousness over many decades. These narratives also undermine the treaty relationship of sharing the land and working together.

4.2 The Importance of Decolonization and Inclusivity in Canadian Museums

A 2017 issue of the CMA’s magazine *Muse* explores the role museums can play in promoting diversity and inclusion in Canadian society. The magazine’s former editor, Mafoya Dossoumon, sums up this potential nicely: “To be the bridges that enable people to share their human experiences, museums must embrace leadership roles in encouraging inclusive communities.... Museums may not have the capacity to solve the world’s problems, but museums can do more to make the world a better place.”²⁸ History museums, in particular, have a role to play in being safe spaces wherein to learn about the difficult parts of the past, which continue to create division and inequity in our communities.

The protocols around the collection and preservation of cultural artifacts remains an issue of pressing concern for museums, especially for institutions located in colonial nations. Over roughly the last two centuries in Europe and its colonial nations, museums created policies that justified the collection of Indigenous objects, supported by a narrative of Indigenous extinction and colonial superiority.²⁹ Artifacts were often taken without consent from Indigenous communities.³⁰ Over the last several decades, the broader museum sector began to address the problems inherent in these colonial museum structures. Collaborating with Indigenous communities to share their histories and repatriating sacred artifacts are some of the ways museums are trying to redress the colonial imbalance.³¹

Repatriation of Indigenous artifacts from museum collections is an important national and international legal issue. The 2007 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*

Peoples (UNDRIP) outlines the rights of Indigenous peoples with respect to their cultural practices, cultural property and historical and cultural representations globally, specifically in articles 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 31.³² Canada officially adopted UNDRIP in May 2016.³³ Thus, UNDRIP guides Canadian museums on ensuring their practices and policies related to Indigenous artifacts and story-telling are in compliance. In February 2018, Canadian Liberal MP Bill Casey brought forward a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons on repatriation, Bill C-391 *Aboriginal Cultural Property Repatriation Act*. As of June 2018, this Bill passed second reading and is now with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.³⁴

For many Indigenous cultures, preserving the intangible spirituality of a sacred object is more important than the physical object itself. Indeed, for many Indigenous cultures the improper handling of sacred objects by colonial museums has been a painful and culturally-dangerous practice. Cultural protocol is often at odds with the goals of Western museums. In the spirit of reconciliation that has evolved from the TRC, and following UNDRIP, museums need to continue to develop policies, procedures and standards around handling Indigenous artifacts and sharing Indigenous stories. Seemingly incompatible cultural practices of heritage preservation can be marshaled through operational agreements that aim to preserve and protect our collective heritage if relationships are based in trust and mutual benefit. These relationships must be constantly nurtured.

From 1988 to 1992, the CMA, working with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), struck a task force to review all museum work as it pertained to Indigenous peoples. The *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples*, released in 1992, has since served as an important tool for Canadian museums undertaking the work of decolonizing and standardizing the handling of Indigenous artifacts.³⁵ For example, the Canadian Museum of History developed a *Repatriation Policy* for their collections based on the recommendations of the Task Force. The RSM also developed a *Policy for the management and repatriation of sacred and culturally sensitive objects of Aboriginal origin*.³⁶ MAS established The First Peoples and Saskatchewan Museums Committee in 1991 and was the first provincial museums association to adopt museum standards for the care of First Nations and Métis sacred and sensitive artifacts in 2001. In 2009, MAS also released a report entitled *First People and Métis Repatriation Guidelines and Procedures*.³⁷

In 2018, the CMA launched a TRC working group to address Call to Action #67.³⁸ This group will provide national-level leadership and resources for museums responding to this Call to Action and other related Calls to Action. In 2018, MAS released a new booklet entitled *The Importance of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples & the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Museums*.³⁹

While the WDM does not have a repatriation policy, it has recently taken steps to identify the Indigenous artifacts in its Collection. The Calls to Action outlined in the *TRC Final Report* will help guide the decolonization and reconciliation work at the WDM. The specific Calls to Action the WDM will focus on are outlined in section 5.3 of this report.

4.3 Decolonization, Inclusivity and Reconciliation Efforts in the Canadian Heritage Sector

In the last several decades, there has been a museological shift away from the colonial foundations of museums. In Canada, museums like the Royal BC Museum and Archives, the Vancouver Museum and the Guelph Museum have undertaken decolonization and reconciliation efforts. Closer to home, the Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society is currently decolonizing.⁴⁰

Museum associations are playing a significant role in tackling decolonization and scholars are calling on the museum sector to do this work.⁴¹ The Government of Canada is also responding to the TRC Calls to Action concerning museums and archives (#67-70). These calls and efforts are explored below. But first, it is important to note that the public is watching these developments closely. For example, the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg has been criticized for both sanitizing its Indigenous content and for failing to address the more difficult parts of this history.⁴² This is why working in partnerships with Indigenous communities is essential.

Decolonization attempts become increasingly important around times of national commemoration like provincial anniversaries or the recent Canada 150 program – the federal government’s celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of the signing of Confederation. Canada 150 and other colonial commemorations have the potential to undermine decolonization efforts. Canada 150 was interpreted by some as disempowering and undermining Indigenous rights and reconciliation.⁴³ In 2017, Pamela Palmater, J.S.D. said in *Now Toronto* that “This year, the federal government plans to spend half a billion dollars on events marking Canada’s 150th anniversary. Meanwhile, essential social services for First Nations people to alleviate crisis-level socio-economic conditions go chronically underfunded.”⁴⁴

Similarly, Jess Housty, a councillor of Heiltsuk First Nation, argues that the “erasure” of Indigenous history is inherent in national commemorations: “I think that narrative of erasure gives us implicit permission for so many damaging, destructive things that it’s easier for society as a whole to turn a blind eye to. They can just pretend that indigenous culture is extinct or no longer authentic past a certain point or no longer relevant.”⁴⁵ Museums need to take note of the issues around these commemorations. This does not mean shying away from marking commemorative dates. Rather, it means that museums should allow space for many voices and decide if commemorations fit with their mandates.

The Government of Canada has responded to Calls to Action #67-70 in several ways, including:

- Providing the CMA with Canadian Heritage funding to establish a plan for a national review, including the creation of a majority Indigenous council of museum experts.
- The Canada 150 Fund invested over \$3.6 million in five projects that focused on Indigenous communities, two of which focused specifically on reconciliation.
- In the 2017 Budget, \$14.9 million was earmarked for the digitization of Indigenous-related content in the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) collections and for support for communities that hold Indigenous language recordings.

- LAC made the TRC web archives available, created new reference tools, updated its Access to Information request process, and is planning exhibits concerning residential schools and Indigenous culture to support better access for Indigenous peoples to records that relate their history. LAC also committed to establishing an Advisory Circle of Indigenous representatives and will collaborate with other institutions and Indigenous organizations.⁴⁶

On April 11, 2018, the CMA passed a resolution entitled “Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.” The full resolution reads:

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) believes that museums, art galleries and related institutions have a responsibility to consult, advocate, engage and collaborate with communities to help build a diverse and socially inclusive world. The CMA recognizes its responsibility to respect the dignity of its members and those it serves in museums, and cultural institutions and their audiences regardless of race, creed, nationality, ancestry, language, religion, age, colour, geography, socio-economic status, disability, family status, social condition, gender identity or expression, sex, sexual orientation, political or religious belief. In efforts to redress many injustices including the legacy of residential schools and to contribute to the process of reconciliation, the CMA affirms the importance of a renewed commitment to promote reconciliation and to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁴⁷

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA) has published a helpful infographic entitled “*Steps Towards Reconciliation: How the Ontario Museum Sector can work towards supporting Indigenous rights, presence, ownership, authority and autonomy.*” The infographic encourages the museum sector to: learn about Indigenous history and local, contemporary issues; read the Calls to Action and UNDRIP; engage in the ongoing process of fostering respectful and strong relationships with local Indigenous communities; and provide acknowledgement of Indigenous land rights and reaffirm on whose traditional territories the museum sits.⁴⁸

The OMA website also provides access to resources like UNDRIP, the *TRC Final Report* and TRC Calls to Action, land acknowledgement guides, and resources for working with Indigenous peoples. In 2017, the OMA entered a partnership project with the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at the Six Nations Polytechnic to organize a series of webinars and an Indigenous Collections Symposium to discuss the “care and interpretation of Indigenous collections” in response to the TRC Calls to Action. A detailed document entitled “Next Steps” resulted from this symposium, which provided ways in which the OMA can contribute to reconciliation.⁴⁹

The Royal BC Museum’s official response to the TRC Calls to Action reaffirmed the need to “question its dogmas, interrogate our languages of reflection, and reassess our relationships with First Nations’ communities.”⁵⁰ The Museum’s official response to the *TRC Final Report* explains in detail some of their efforts to answer the Calls to Action.

The first major area of response is with education programs, “to effectively engage citizens in educational programs concerning First Nations culture and identity. A core component of these programs is the participation of First Nations communities as both teachers and students.”⁵¹ Some of these education initiatives include: stepping stones on the floor of the First Peoples’ Gallery with information about each Call to Action on each stone; a project to create listening booths in museum galleries with recordings of a survivor’s experiences in residential school; a *Truth and Reconciliation School Program-Learning Lab* for grades 4 and 5 students which is an “instructional program on the topic of Truth and Reconciliation [d]irected by Cowichan First Nation Museum School Programmer, Hannah Morales;” and an additional section of the museum website’s *Learning Portal* on the history of Residential Schools.⁵²

The second main area of response is with language, wherein the Royal BC Museum has “several ongoing projects that support the use and protection of indigenous languages.”⁵³

The final main area of response is with cultural engagement. The Museum’s response states: “Our forms of knowledge, with their subjective, overlapping and cross-cultural uses, must occur within a common space of dialogue, discovery and intercultural negotiation and engagement.”⁵⁴ To fulfill this, the museum committed to a policy review to ensure all policies aligned with “the principles of reconciliation, representation and cross-cultural collaboration.”⁵⁵ The museum also committed to providing free access for First Nations people to archival holdings, collections storage, and their First Peoples galleries.⁵⁶

On July 6, 2018, the Museum of Vancouver announced new members to its Board of Directors. Chief Janice George (Skwxwú7mesh Nation), Leona Sparrow (Musqueam Indian Band) and Karen Thomas (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), were elected to the Museum’s Board as representatives from Vancouver’s three host First Nations.⁵⁷

On June 22, 2017, Guelph Museums held a free Truth and Reconciliation Sharing Circle. This event included hand drumming and the creation of a community plan of action regarding Truth and Reconciliation.⁵⁸

On March 7, 2018 the Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society (SHFS) released a statement entitled “Reconciliation Requires Re-evaluating Prairie History.”⁵⁹ This statement repositioned the organization’s mandate to tell a more inclusive and honest history of settler-colonialism in Saskatchewan History. The statement read,

We believe settler Canadians can be proud of what the pioneers achieved after arriving on surveyed quarter sections, with little money in their pockets and dreams in their hearts. However, if that pride is not balanced by a recognition of the consequences that settlement had (and still has) for Indigenous people, then what we are doing is neither researching history nor documenting folklore, but merely pedaling nostalgia.⁶⁰

The SHFS's important shift in the way they help facilitate the sharing of Saskatchewan's history should serve as inspiration to the WDM to do the same in the production of its exhibit and program narratives. Indeed, all the initiatives above are good starting points for the work ahead.

Other public institutions and private industries are also working on decolonization, reconciliation and inclusivity. Examples include schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, the justice system and local businesses. These efforts are led by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, either individually or in partnership, and by newcomers and settlers alike working towards ally-ship.

Some recent examples of these efforts include:

- the creation of Indigenous Studies programs at universities;⁶¹
- the hiring of more Indigenous faculty on campuses;⁶² (U of S College of Arts and Science implemented their Aboriginal Faculty Recruitment Plan which will hire Indigenous scholars to three annual faculty openings over the next ten years, thereby raising “the proportion of Aboriginal arts and science faculty members to nearly 15 per cent: on par with the overall Aboriginal population of Saskatchewan.”)⁶³
- the production of documentaries about Canada's colonial impact on Indigenous peoples;⁶⁴
- mandatory treaty education in Saskatchewan schools;⁶⁵
- calls for reforms to the justice system in the wake of two high-profile acquittals in the murder trials of Gerald Stanley and Raymond Cormier;⁶⁶
- Indigenous student leaders calling for an Indigenous Students Union at the University of Saskatchewan and disengaging from reconciliation work until this demand is met;⁶⁷
- the founding of the Saskatoon Aboriginal Professionals Association (SAPA) in 2013, “a non-profit organization that is dedicated to building a network, the capacity, and advancing First Nations, Metis and Inuit (Aboriginal) professionals into leadership roles in the Saskatoon area in the private, public, governmental and educational sectors.”⁶⁸

5.0 Taking Stock: A Review of the WDM

In the 1940s, when the WDM was established, European (from Western and Eastern Europe) and Scandinavian settlers and their descendants represented the majority of the population in Saskatchewan at 91.5% (2.5% were Indigenous and 5.9% were recorded as “other” in the Census which would have included immigrants from Asiatic countries).⁶⁹ 44.4% of these settlers were of British origin.⁷⁰ In 1946, the Census of the Prairie Provinces revealed that more people in Saskatchewan lived in the rural parts of the province than in cities. However, this was a decline in rural population from the previous decade, especially in the years 1941-46. The symbiotic trends of rural depopulation and urbanization that would come to characterize Saskatchewan demographics in the second half of the 20th century had begun.⁷¹ For the founders of the WDM, this, along with the effects of two world wars, created worrisome conditions for the future of agricultural life in Saskatchewan. As such, they aimed to preserve the heritage of a way of life they believed was under threat.

Today, in 2018, the WDM's collection does not represent the histories of all Saskatchewan's people. In a recent report for SaskCulture, *Sask Trends Monitor* reported that, since 2006, immigrants from the Philippines represent the highest proportion of newcomers to Saskatchewan; indeed, the 2011 census revealed that between 2006 and 2011, 10,090 immigrants from the Philippines moved to Saskatchewan, followed by China, India, and Ukraine.⁷² Between 2011 and 2016, 47,935 people immigrated to Saskatchewan: 16,615 from the Philippines, followed by India (6,150), Pakistan (3,460) and China (3,345).⁷³

Moreover, Saskatchewan's Indigenous population has climbed from 2.5% of the total population in 1941 to 11.3% in 2011, and 16.3% in 2016.⁷⁴ In some parts of Saskatchewan, this number is higher: In the City of North Battleford, 28.8% of census respondents in 2016 self-identified as Indigenous, for example.⁷⁵ The Indigenous population in Canada is a fast-growing and young population.⁷⁶

5.1 Decolonization and Inclusivity

The WDM needs to review all aspects of its operations to enhance inclusiveness and diversity. This includes governance, human resources, policy, education and public programming, collections, exhibits, gift shops, catering and event partnering. There are many resources available on how to start this work, following the lead of other cultural organizations like Reconciliation Saskatoon, MAS, SaskCulture and Heritage Saskatchewan. Their websites and annual reports provide information about inclusivity and culture in Saskatchewan.

The WDM is not alone in its goals to decolonize, diversify and be recognized as more inclusive in order to be a sustainable organization. In their 2016-17 *Annual Report*, SaskCulture indicated that "the biggest incentive to cultural organizations building inclusiveness might be sustainability."⁷⁷ To help organizations achieve these goals SaskCulture created a "Diversity and Inclusiveness" area on its website.⁷⁸ Community-based service organizations can also assist with this work.

UNDRIP provides the international legal rationale to engage in this work. The TRC Calls to Action outline how Canadians and Canadian institutions can work towards reconciliation. History museums like the WDM are well-positioned to disseminate the truth about the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples in a safe environment. Indeed, the WDM can be a provincial and national leader in the truth objectives outlined by the TRC.

One of the most problematic expressions of colonialism that underpins the foundation of the WDM is the name of the Museum. The name 'Western Development Museum' perpetuates the myths of Manifest Destiny, Terra Nullius and Settler-Colonialism. It insinuates that cultural and economic development occurred only after contact, was achieved only by settlers and that a linear march of progress was the end goal. These assumptions erase Indigenous peoples from the narrative, sidelining them as obstacles in the way of progress.

There must be a consultative reconsideration of the name of the Museum to support change and capture the essence of the WDM in the 21st century – a History Museum for all Saskatchewan's people. Without this, the overarching framework of the Museum will remain steeped in

colonialism and nostalgia and true reconciliation may be difficult. While this will be difficult for some and require additional financial resources, the change will precipitate inclusivity to the degree that no other change can. Moreover, clarity that the WDM is the provincially-mandated human history museum of the Province of Saskatchewan would become more explicit through a change in the organization's name.

5.2 Challenging Settler and Diversity Narratives

Enshrined in Section 11 of *The Western Development Act* (1949) is the mandate to tell the history of the Saskatchewan people through a variety of mechanisms. Since its inception, the WDM has done a remarkable job of telling the agricultural history of the province and the social, cultural and political histories of its European settlers. The WDM is known throughout Canada, and internationally, as having some of the most complete collections of agricultural implements and steam traction engines, for example. The overarching narratives in both WDM exhibits and programs have been ones of progress, development, improvement, innovation, invention, resilience and perseverance.

Throughout most of the 20th century, these historical narratives reflected settler society's view of their own past and historians' and museum curators' interpretations of the past. This was due in large part to the make-up of both museum employees, faculties in History departments and Education/Teacher Training colleges in Western Canada in the first half of the 20th century, which were predominantly of settler, often British, ancestry and usually male.

Since the 1990s, Canadian historians and some museum curators have taken several turns in their approaches to settler history. Historians themselves are more representative of the larger demographic. More female professors are working today than any other time in history and more visible minorities and those who self-identify as Indigenous are represented in academia. Most historians working in Canadian universities no longer write history that celebrates settler-colonialism. Their research over the last 20-30 years has revealed that the benefits settlers derived from colonialism were gained at the expense of Indigenous peoples.

This research and these historical interpretations do not negate that settlers worked hard. Their histories should be understood, and they should be commended for the communities they built and the contributions they made to the province, as well as their nation-building efforts. However, those accomplishments need to be better contextualized within the settler-colonial policies that we now understand made settlement possible in the first place and not within a paradigm of "meritocracy," according to Dr. Sheelah McLean, an anti-racist educator, organizer of Idle No More and of settler descent:⁷⁹

The myth that Canadian society is created on individual work ethic ignores how racially dominant groups gain access to social and political power. This discourse also masks how racialized groups are denied access to these same resources and opportunities. The myth of meritocracy reinforces liberal individualism, providing the public with racist explanations for the vast inequalities that exist between Indigenous people and white settler society. While my grandparents

certainly worked hard to provide for their families it is essential to understand how government policies secured my family's social and political status.⁸⁰

New research has also shed light on many other forms of exclusion and racism in Saskatchewan's past including a strong KKK membership, policies that forced assimilation of non-English speaking immigrants, and discrimination aimed at LGBTQ2+ people and communities as well as those with disabilities, differences and other medical problems.⁸¹ As the provincially-mandated human history museum of Saskatchewan, the WDM should strive to share this new research with the people of the province through accessible public history outputs.

In the early years of the WDM, attempts were made to include French, Eastern European and Scandinavian settlers' experiences alongside the dominant British-settler narrative. In the last few decades, the WDM has made good efforts to tell more inclusive stories, particularly during the development of the *Winning the Prairie Gamble* exhibits. Overall, however, primacy has been given to the story of agriculture and British-descendant homesteaders. This is partly due to the collecting efforts of George Shepherd, the WDM's first curator, who was particularly interested in the history of Anglo-settlement, himself a British settler to Saskatchewan.⁸² This focus is still reflected in many of the exhibits at all four locations, in school and public programs and in the content on the WDM's website and social media channels.

As stated in its Mission, the WDM is to be the:

keeper of Saskatchewan's collective heritage. The Museum shares the province's unique sense of place with all people for their understanding and enjoyment – recognizing that the legacy of the past is the foundation for a sustainable future.⁸³

Thus, as the “keeper” of this collective heritage for “all people,” it is within the WDM's Mission to represent the experiences of **all** Saskatchewan people. To this end, the WDM Board of Directors has recently made two significant strides towards inclusivity, diversity and reconciliation by adopting the following resolution on September 14, 2017;

The Western Development Museum affirms the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. We commit to engaging in reconciliation by responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in our Strategic Plan. In partnership with Saskatchewan's Indigenous communities, we aim to develop more inclusive operations, programming and exhibits for the Museum.⁸⁴

Working from a new Vision Statement the WDM launched in the 2016-17 fiscal year, **A Saskatchewan where everyone belongs and histories matter**, the WDM Board of Directors also created a first set of Ends statements that move the Museum towards better inclusivity: *People's lives are enriched by connecting with Saskatchewan's diverse histories and Saskatchewan people experience a sense of place and belonging because their histories are shared through the WDM.*⁸⁵

In August 2018, the WDM released a new *Strategic Plan* for 2018-21 that includes the following strategies to promote inclusivity:

- Prioritize collecting from underrepresented communities;
- Establish significance criteria to guide collection management decisions;
- Ensure museum programs and services are welcoming, inclusive and diverse;
- Provide safe and accessible environments that support people of all abilities;
- Eliminate (reduce) intellectual, cultural and social barriers;
- Review and renew exhibits and programs;
- Increase engagement, inclusion and access;
- Promote knowledge and awareness of Saskatchewan's diverse histories;
- Implement inclusion strategies including responding to the TRC Calls to Action.

These are important first steps towards decolonization, inclusivity and eventually reconciliation at the WDM.

5.3 TRC Calls to Action and the WDM

In 2015, Justice Murray Sinclair advised that the Calls to Action were designed as an opportunity for governments, institutions and ordinary Canadians to move reconciliation forward:

Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem – it involves all of us. Our recommendations should not be seen as an itemization of national penance, but as an opportunity to embrace a second chance at establishing a relationship of equals... an opportunity for Canadians to prove to themselves and to the international community that Canada respects and protects the cultures of all peoples within it.⁸⁶

While some calls specifically ask federal, provincial, territorial and/or municipal government to act, individual Canadians, groups and organizations have interpreted them as actionable as well.

The Calls to Action relate to the WDM as:

- a third-party agent of the Government of Saskatchewan;
- a cultural public institution with an active membership;
- a History museum;
- an artifact collection, library and archive;
- an educational provider.

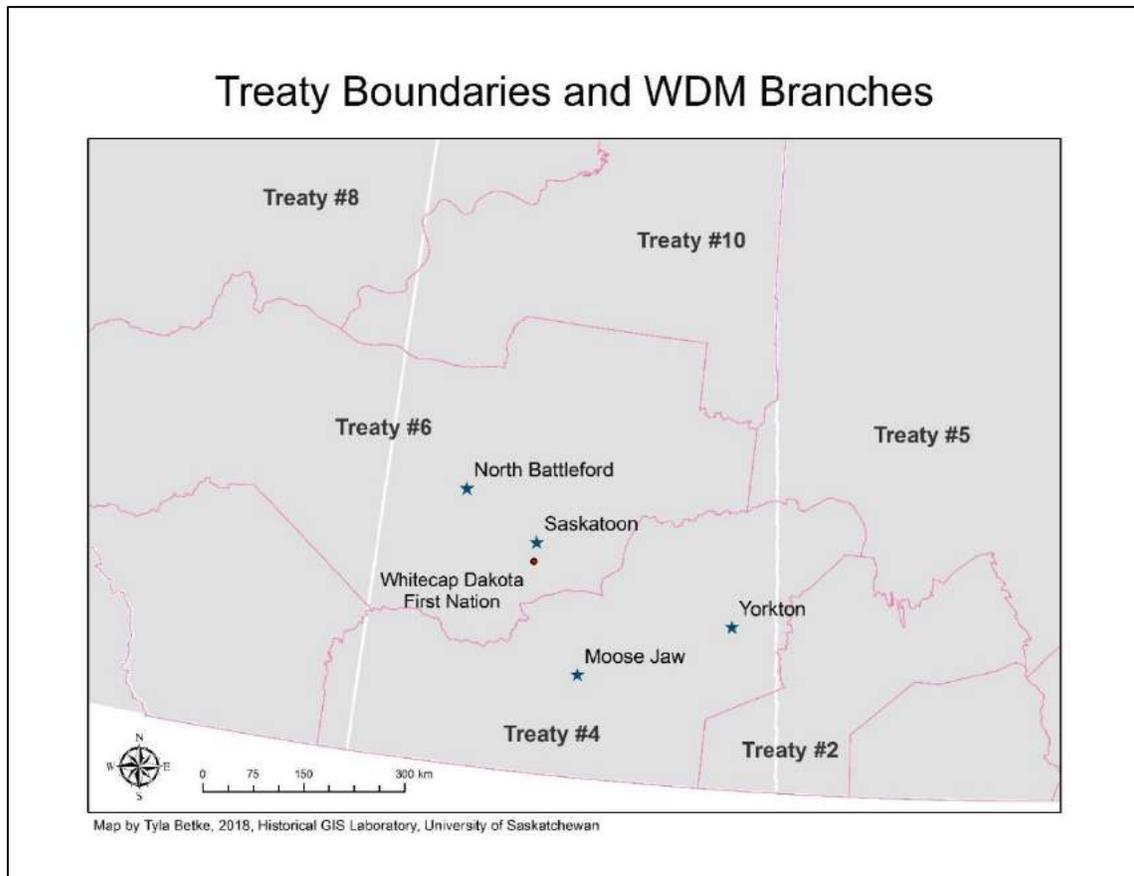
Within the 94 Calls to Action made by the TRC, the WDM has identified eight that the Museum will respond to. These are as follows:

Call #43 We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

- Call #55** We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.
- Call #57** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential school, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- Call #62** We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- Call #67** We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.
- Call #77** We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the NCTR.
- Call #79** We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organization, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:
- ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history and
 - iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.

Call #87 We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

The Calls to Action are also relevant to all four WDM locations because they operate in treaty territories. The four WDM exhibit locations are situated in Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories and the Homeland of the Métis, as shown in the map below.⁸⁷ Not a signatory to Treaty 6, Whitecap Dakota First Nation is a close neighbour of the WDM Saskatoon and has its own history of treaty-making in what became Canada. The WDM will recognize this history as part of its response to the TRC Calls to Action. The treaty relationship can serve as a natural starting point towards decolonization and reconciliation for the WDM.



5.4 WDM Collections

In the first decades of the Museum, artifact donations and collecting priorities were focused on preserving Euro-Canadian settler agricultural history. These artifacts included farm machinery, Christian effects and prototypical homestead/domestic items. A 2013 WDM document entitled *Towards an Acquisitions Plan for the WDM* outlines this: "For 65 years, the WDM has been best known for its pre-1940 pioneer, agricultural and transportation collections.... Although effort has

been made to collect post-Second World War artifacts, the WDM remains in the eyes of the public a pioneer museum. To be relevant to more people, collections and exhibits and indeed, the entire WDM, needs to move forward in time.”⁸⁸

The Collection contains a limited number of artifacts from other communities in Saskatchewan, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Chinese, Japanese and LGBTQ2+ peoples. In all cases, the number of artifacts from each of these groups amounts to an underrepresentation. In some cases, these artifacts are not from these community members themselves, but rather are tourist or stylized items. There are no artifacts from East Indian/Pakistani, African, Caribbean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Latin American, Middle Eastern and other immigrants, for example, who began to come to Canada in the mid-20th century.

There are approximately 300 artifacts in the WDM collections that relate to Indigenous peoples in Canada. There are additionally approximately 100 photographs and postcards held in both collections and the library that relate to Indigenous peoples. There may also be uncatalogued, non-inventoried artifacts that form part of these collections. This information will be gleaned over time as we conduct new inventories. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many Indigenous artifacts were transferred from the WDM to the RSM.

5.5 WDM Exhibits

WDM Moose Jaw

The WDM Moose Jaw is primarily a transportation museum although many exhibits extend past this theme. The four large halls cover aircraft, watercraft, land transportation and railway history. A smaller gallery of Snowbirds artifacts and memorabilia and the *Winning the Prairie Gamble (WTPG)* present Saskatchewan-specific content in detail. Notable examples of inclusion and diversity in this location are the *WTPG* gallery’s transportation module and timeline.

Updates to language and content are required throughout the Museum. Further, there are many opportunities for integration of new material. The aviation section could tell stories of northern aviation and Indigenous veterans; winter and water transport exhibits have the potential to educate visitors on Indigenous knowledge; and the rail galleries could explore effects of racism, class and privilege.

WDM North Battleford

The premiere exhibit of the WDM North Battleford is an outdoor heritage village and farm set in the 1920s. Of the 39 buildings on display, 16 (including houses, churches, a grain elevator and railway station) are artifacts. Other than during special events, the village is largely uninterpreted. Indoors, there is a large exhibit hall display a collection of rare steam engines and exhibits on town and farm life in the 1920s, along with the *WTPG* timeline and modules.

Born with a Drum, a module in the *WTPG* gallery was developed in partnership with Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC) and includes content on Indigenous languages, residential school experiences and Indigenous economic development. Since this exhibit was

created before the *TRC Final Report* and the adoption of UNDRIP, some content is now out of date and immediate review is required.

Indeed, a full review of language used throughout the village and indoor galleries is necessary. There are many existing exhibit spaces in the village and indoor galleries that can be repurposed or expanded to tell more inclusive stories. Alongside land maps and settlement papers, the village RM office is an appropriate place to interpret the history of treaty making, displacement and creation of reserves, and other events. The railway station offers an excellent context to display a wider story of immigration history. As many of the spaces at this location do not have permanent signage, any new interpretation that is developed can de-centre the dominant settler narrative and create opportunities for education.

WDM Saskatoon

The WDM Saskatoon houses the densest concentration of exhibits in the WDM system. The galleries include an indoor representation of a 1910s Saskatchewan “*Boomtown*” streetscape, the flagship *WTPG* exhibit as well as transportation, agriculture and innovation-themed galleries.

Boomtown Street is, like the North Battleford Village, largely un-interpreted. However, newer exhibits have integrated modern signage and lighting into the diorama style exhibits; the RNWMP and Funeral Home exhibits, are examples. This has afforded the WDM opportunities to contextualize what has been included and omitted from this largely colonial narrative. More work can be done to de-centre the settler story in this major exhibit. There is potential for redevelopment of buildings to interpret unrepresented immigration and Indigenous histories.

Some content in the *WTPG* exhibit in Saskatoon was developed in consultation with SICC including treaty history, agricultural practices, pass and permit systems and other assimilation policies. Further, a small module on Métis history was created in consultation with Gabriel Dumont Institute. All of these sections warrant review and expansion.

In general, there is an unbalanced focus on the Euro-Canadian settlement story in the exhibits at the WDM Saskatoon. Significant exhibit space must be found for treaty education exhibits, the residential school experience, immigration and refugee narratives, and other new stories.

WDM Yorkton

The exhibits at the WDM Yorkton tell stories of Saskatchewan people. Immigration history galleries include a railway station and dioramas depicting homes of early immigrant groups (American, British, Ukrainian, German). The *WTPG* timeline module themes are immigration and leisure.

There are many exhibits that contribute to inclusion and diversity goals at this location. Some examples are the *From Many Peoples Strength* display which de-centres the Anglo-centric settlement story through an immersive Ukrainian sod house installation and the railway station which represents settlers from Iceland, Scotland, England, Norway, France, Poland, Hungary and Russia. Less diversity is represented in the dioramas which are all in need of updates.

The major exhibits at this location range in age from the opening of the Museum to 2009 and as such a thorough review of content and language usage is warranted. A major opportunity for inclusion is to redevelop the themed diorama rooms in partnership with local community groups.

5.6 WDM Education and Public Programs

Many WDM school and public programs have a long tradition of sharing a Euro-centric, rural, agrarian-view of life in early 20th century Saskatchewan. While there is value in offering these types of programs, especially where they meet outcomes set out in the Saskatchewan school curriculum, there is a need to review these programs with an eye to inclusivity and diversity.

In 2018, a preliminary review of WDM school programs began with the focus on Indigenous content and inclusive language. Several 'Discovery Box' programs that focused on Indigenous content were removed from the WDM's school program offerings until the WDM can consult with Indigenous communities. While the boxes contain some good information and artifacts, they pre-date the *TRC Final Report* and Canada's adoption of UNDRIP and need to be reviewed. Seven remaining 'Discovery Box' programs were given a surface-level update to ensure the language included is inclusive.

The Grade 4 Harvest Demonstration scripts (North Battleford and Saskatoon) were also reviewed and updated to include gender-neutral language, treaty acknowledgements and recognition of the challenges Indigenous people faced during the settlement period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While a review of WDM school and public programs takes place regularly (typically every 1 – 5 years), programs will now not only be reviewed for content, visitor engagement and their ability to meet curricular outcomes (in the case of school programs), they will also be reviewed with focus on representing more diverse stories and inclusive language.

6.0 Recommendations

Over the past year, the WDM Board of Directors have begun to lay the framework for reconciliation, diversity and inclusion at the WDM. The first step was approving the WDM's Ends Statement. The Board of Directors establishes the strategic direction and expected outcomes for the WDM through its Ends Statement. Approved on September 14, 2017 the Ends Statement defines the difference the WDM is focused on achieving for the people of Saskatchewan.

Major End: A Saskatchewan where everyone belongs and histories matter.

Sub-Ends Statements:

1. People's lives are enriched by connecting with Saskatchewan's diverse histories.

2. Saskatchewan people experience a sense of place and belonging because their histories are shared through the WDM.

In addition to the Ends Statement, the Board of Directors also adopted the following Statement of Intent:

The Western Development Museum affirms the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. We commit to engaging in reconciliation by responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in our Strategic Plan. In partnership with Saskatchewan's Indigenous communities, we aim to develop more inclusive operations, programming and exhibits for the Museum. (Adopted September 15, 2017)

Alongside the WDM *Strategic Plan for 2018-21*, the *Inclusivity Report: Reconciliation and Diversity at the Western Development Museum* serves as the guiding document to help the WDM improve inclusivity and diversity throughout the organization.

Once enacted, the following recommendations will begin the process of decolonizing and moving the WDM towards becoming a more inclusive and diverse organization.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Publicly acknowledge Indigenous peoples and their histories.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Responding to the eight Calls to Action identified in section 5.3 of this report by creating a workplan for reconciliation.
- b. Including land/treaty acknowledgements on all staff email signatures.
- c. Prominently displaying land/treaty acknowledgements on the WDM website.
- d. Including a section on the WDM's reconciliation efforts on the WDM website.
- e. Including a land/treaty acknowledgement in opening remarks for all WDM events, programs, tours and activities.
- f. Inviting Elders to bring greetings and open gatherings, events and programs.
- g. Permanently raising Treaty 4 (WDM Moose Jaw, WDM Yorkton), Treaty 6 (WDM North Battleford, WDM Saskatoon) and Métis (all locations) flags. The creation of a WDM Flag Policy is required to achieve this goal. Consulting with Whitecap Dakota First Nation (not signatories to Treaty 6) on the Flag Policy for the WDM Saskatoon as close neighbours.
- h. Including signage at all WDM locations welcoming visitors to treaty territory and the homeland of the Métis. Incorporating "We are all treaty people" and the Provincial motto "From many peoples, strength" as part of this signage would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide training and educational opportunities for staff and volunteers including cultural awareness, anti-racism, and sensitivity training to improve overall organizational cultural competency.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Creating staff and volunteer resources and training programs on inclusivity and diversity.
- b. Compiling and sharing documents and resources on inclusivity, diversity and treaty education.¹
- c. Educating staff on the history and lasting impacts of Canadian assimilation laws and policies.
- d. Supporting staff and volunteers interested in furthering their education by providing time to participate in relevant training.²
- e. Provide training for staff and volunteers on the proper protocol required for working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- f. Updating the WDM's Style Guide to incorporate best practices in inclusive language.³
- g. Arranging for cultural awareness and treaty education for staff and volunteers through the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and other service providers.
- h. Arranging for the delivery of the KAIROS blanket exercise for all staff and volunteers.
- i. Arranging for organizations like OUTSaskatoon and Moose Jaw Pride to deliver LGBTQ2+ diversity training across the WDM network.
- j. Arranging for training on Indigenous Two-Spirit Identity.
- k. Arranging for organizations like Inclusion Saskatchewan and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan to deliver inclusivity and anti-racism training and education.

¹ The City of Saskatoon *ayisinowak: A Communications Guide* is a good example of a resource to circulate: https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/community-services/planning-development/future-growth/regional-planning/ayisinowak_a_communications_guide_web_may_2018.pdf. Another useful guide is: Ian Cull, Robert L.A. Hancock, Stephanie McKeown, Michelle Pidgeon and Adrienne Vedan, "Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors," part of series *Pulling Together: A Guide for Indigenization of Post-Secondary Institutions*, available at: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/>.

² Some free courses include: UBC, "Reconciliation through Indigenous Education" (certificate course) <http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation/> and University of Alberta, "Indigenous Canada" <https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada>

³ Using guides like this one: "Inclusive Language Guide". Office of Diversity, Equity, and Protected Disclosure, June 2018, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/odepd/files/odepd/inclusive-language-guide-june-13-2017.pdf>.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Report on reconciliation and inclusivity activities and progress.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Having information in all WDM locations outlining our progress on inclusivity and reconciliation initiatives.
- b. Sharing our progress in *Sparks* (the WDM Newsletter) and on the WDM website.
- c. Submitting the WDM Annual Report to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR).
- d. Creating a tracking document of all reconciliation activities for submission to the NCTR.
- e. Sharing reconciliation and inclusivity activities with museum and heritage organizations provincially and nationally.
- f. Sharing reconciliation activities with Heart of Treaty 6 Reconciliation, Reconciliation Saskatoon and Reconciliation Regina groups (and other Reconciliation groups that are created in the future).
- g. Asking for feedback from Indigenous, newcomer and LGBTQ2+ community members on how we are doing, through surveys, town halls or similar activities.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Assess collection management practices to ensure they support inclusivity and reconciliation.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Establishing new significance criteria for actively collecting from underrepresented communities.
- b. Updating the Collections Management Policy and procedures to align with UNDRIP, including providing free unrestricted access to the Collection for First Nations and Métis communities who wish to see artifacts or submit repatriation applications.
- c. Reviewing the Indigenous artifacts in the WDM collection and establishing a plan to bring these collections into alignment with TRC Call #67.
- d. Identifying any residential school artifacts, photographs and documents in the WDM Collection and sharing this information with the NCTR.
- e. Identifying all photographs of Indigenous people in the WDM's collection and seeking involvement from Indigenous communities to name the individuals in the photos.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Develop and implement a plan for exhibit renewal at all WDM locations to increase overall diversity and inclusivity in the stories being told.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Renaming the Winning the Prairie Gamble exhibits. The name implies that settlers “won” in the colonial project and creates a barrier to reconciliation.
- b. Developing exhibit plans that integrate narratives of underrepresented communities.
- c. Establishing partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to explore the creation of new exhibits on themes related to Indigenous culture, treaties, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous athletes, Indigenous veterans, Indigenous entrepreneurship and economic development stories, etc.
- d. Establishing partnerships with cultural and community groups to explore the creation of new exhibits and themes related to their histories.
- e. Reviewing and updating signage to align with Recommendation 2(f).

RECOMMENDATION 6: Review, update and renew all education and public programs to ensure they align with reconciliation and inclusivity goals.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Ceasing to offer any programs focusing on Indigenous histories until they can be reviewed and updated in full partnership with Indigenous organizations.
- b. Reviewing and updating the language used in programming to reflect current best practices (i.e. settlers instead of pioneers).
- c. Establishing partnerships with Indigenous organizations to deliver education and public programs.
- d. Establishing partnerships with cultural and community groups to explore the creation of new educational programs related to their histories.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Review, update and renew overall WDM operations to align with reconciliation and inclusivity goals.

This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- a. Consulting with the broad community to change the name of the WDM to something that is more inclusive and reflective of the Museum’s vision.
- b. Reviewing policies to ensure they align with the principles of reconciliation, representation and cross-cultural collaboration.
- c. Reviewing hiring practices to ensure they are free from bias.
- d. Reviewing documents and forms to ensure the language being used is inclusive.
- e. Researching and writing more reports as required that help us better understand our deficiencies and how we can make improvements.

7.0 Conclusion

Since the *TRC Final Report* was released in 2015, there has been encouraging momentum towards reconciliation in Canadian society and in the museum sector. However, there is still a long way to go. It is important to remember that many of the Calls to Action asked of Canadians are not new. In 1996, the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, called for museums to make improvements with respect to Indigenous peoples' cultural heritage:

We ... urge museums and cultural institutions to adopt ethical guidelines for the collection, display and interpretation of artifacts related to Aboriginal cultures. Aboriginal people need greater access to their own cultural heritage, more opportunities for cultural education, and increased resources to develop their own facilities for display and study.⁸⁹

The time to enact change is thus long overdue. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, museum professionals and social and political commentators alike continue to call on the sector to proactively engage with community partners to achieve what York University PhD candidate Jesse Thistle has recently called “*real* repatriation.”⁹⁰ This includes decolonization processes like hiring Indigenous curators and giving Indigenous communities full control and ownership of their artifacts in museum collections.

The recent governance changes by the WDM Board of Directors lays the groundwork for operational changes at the WDM that can launch decolonization processes and favour inclusivity, community-based research and engagement. Some of the recommendations set forth in this report may take many years or may never be feasible without a significant increase in capacity. They will also be dependent on the nature and extent of relationships built with communities in the years to come. However, at this juncture in the WDM's history it is worth taking stock of current content, to move towards being more representative and to more meaningfully engage with patrons and stakeholders. This will help achieve the social responsibilities expected of modern museums and the communities they serve.

While reconciliation is an integral part of the WDM's responsibility as the provincially-mandated human history museum of Saskatchewan, these efforts will be hollow and ineffective if the Museum does not also undergo a process of decolonization. Success will be defined as much by the ‘undoing’ of old ways as creating new content and structures. In some cases, the most appropriate course of action will be to remove certain displays and cancel certain programs rather than revise them. In other cases, revisions will make significant impacts towards inclusivity. There will be time to create more inclusive content after the first efforts are made to dismantle and shift the structures that have created and perpetuated exclusionary narratives in the Museum. These narratives are not unique to the WDM. Almost all museums in Canada face similar challenges. Building meaningful and lasting relationships with First Nations, Métis and diverse communities in Saskatchewan will be key to realizing these goals.

Staff and volunteer professional development is essential to this process. Standards related to the use of culturally-appropriate language, Indigenous education, sensitivity with respect to diversity and physical and intellectual accessibility must be delivered throughout the Museum for all staff and volunteers. Frequent intervals of review and evaluation will help the WDM keep pace with cultural change and build cultural competency. Staff and volunteers need to be empowered to help enact this change with confidence-building training and professional development.

Collaboration between the four WDM exhibit locations and the Corporate Office will be key to the success of this work. Community organizations will be integral partners in providing learning and securing engagement towards meeting these goals. The *WDM Strategic Plan* for 2018-21 outlines the organization's goals and strategies towards these ends.⁹¹

Our provincial motto, *From many peoples, strength* has never been more relevant than it is today. Getting to know each other's stories – what they are now and what they have been – connects us. It is through shared experiences and getting to know each other that we become more understanding, more empathetic to what makes us similar rather than focusing on what makes us different.

This is only the beginning. There is no end to this process. It is a living entity and will require nurturing. The work is not meant to be easy. Decolonization scholars remind us that shifting settler privilege and consciousness is "...an uncomfortable but necessary first step in a lifelong and urgent journey of dismantling colonial systems and structures."⁹² Embracing change should be the new norm for the WDM to keep it healthy and vibrant for years to come.

Diversity enriches our lives, but only if we make the effort to be inclusive and bring all our stories, good or bad, into our public places. Everyone deserves to feel like they belong, and belonging is seeing yourself reflected in the public institutions around you.

At the WDM, we are committed to inclusivity, one story at a time.

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