

Anti-Racism Legislation Engagement – What We Heard

Summary of April/May 2021 meetings with First Nations, Indigenous Communities and Other Racialized Communities

In April and May 2021, Rachna Singh, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, held a series of meetings with ten key partners and organizations. They represent Indigenous leadership, as well as advisory committees and organizations led by Black and other racialized community members that work with government through the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network and other areas to support anti-racism initiatives across the province.

Participants were asked to provide input and advice on how government can engage in broader community and public consultations on two pieces of anti-racism legislation B.C. intends to introduce in the coming years: an act related to race-based data in 2022, and a new anti-racism act in 2023.

We would like to acknowledge participants' contributions and for taking the time out of their schedules to contribute.

What We Heard:

The organizations provided Parliamentary Secretary Singh with various suggestions on how to approach broader consultation in a way that is culturally safe and meets the needs of communities. This includes:

- **Distinctions-Based Approach:** In order to meet its commitments to the Declaration, government should consider consulting First Nations individually, inviting each to co-develop the legislation and taking an approach that recognizes the unique histories, rights and culture when consulting with other Indigenous Peoples, either in partnership with the nations or organizations that represent them..
- **Community-Led:** Communities are best placed to understand and share the needs of their members. By taking a community-led approach, government can partner directly with groups that represent racialized communities to establish deeper connections with Indigenous and racialized communities.
- **Accessible:** Consultation materials should be made accessible to various communities (ex. translated into multiple languages) and sessions should be designed in a way to make them accessible and culturally safe for Indigenous and racialized communities, recognizing that people are being engaged on issues of racism which can stir up trauma. This may include in-person sessions facilitated in first language or with interpreters, small group sessions, with culturally appropriate refreshments provided, culturally appropriate venues; or on-line feedback opportunities advertised in multiple languages through social media channels used by communities and/or print/radio/tv.
- **Intersectional:** Engagement with individual Indigenous and racialized communities can create safer spaces and help identify unique perspectives from specific communities, but engagement processes should recognize that communities aren't homogenous and many British Columbians have multiple, intersectional identities (e.g. mixed-race British Columbians, racialized youth, women of colour, LGBTQ2S+ racialized communities, etc.). Creating space for intersectional voices in consultation processes will support fuller, more robust solutions to racism and discrimination.
- **Resources:** If community organizations are leading consultations, they may require additional resources or funding to support the process and allow them to fully engage with members of their community.

- **Open and Transparent:** It is important to be open about the historical context, government's overall plan and progress, how consultation will inform the plan, and the change communities can expect as a result.

Partners and organizations engaged:

- First Nations Leadership Council
- Métis Nation BC
- BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
- Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women
- Minister's Multicultural Advisory Council
- Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network
- African Arts and Cultural Contributor Society (Resilience BC "Community Convener" on anti-Black racism)
- Al-Ihsan Foundation and key representatives from Muslim, Sikh, and Jewish organizations (Resilience BC "Community Convener" on faith-based racism and hate)
- Hua Foundation (Resilience BC "Community Convener" on anti-Asian racism)

Questions about the consultation process.

From your experience, what steps can government take to create meaningful consultation processes for community voices to be heard, respected and considered?

- a. How might we shape this engagement process to make it truly anti-racist?
- b. What kind of anti-racist approaches should we be thinking about?
- c. Also, to ensure people have the right information to participate in the consultations, what do you think communities will need to know to participate in a meaningful way? What type of information should be shared?

Questions specific to Indigenous consultation:

From your experience and perspective as First Nations Leadership, what steps can the government take to develop a consultation process that is truly anti-racist? What does this process look like under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)?

- a. What kind of approaches should we look at?
- b. What does an anti-racist approach look like for Indigenous Nations and communities?
- c. How would your Nations and communities want to be involved in this work?
- d. Do you have recommendations for facilitators who are familiar with engaging Indigenous Nations and communities?