



2022

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2023

ANNUAL REPORT



**YUKON  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS**  
COMMISSION

**COMMISSION  
DES DROITS  
DE LA PERSONNE**  
DU YUKON



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# About

The Yukon Human Rights Commission (the Commission) was created in 1987 to promote **human rights** through **research**, **education**, and **enforcement** of the Yukon *Human Rights Act* (the Act). The Commission is **independent** from all levels of government. Its process is **governed by the Act and the Yukon *Human Rights Regulations***.



8

STAFF

1

STUDENT

5

COMMISSION  
MEMBERS

## Rights Promotion

The Commission provides accessible training and materials on a variety of human rights topics, including workplace sexual harassment. Customized training is available for those who request it.



## Rights Protection

The Commission administers the “Complaint Resolution” component of the *Human Rights Act*. This means that we determine whether a complaint can be accepted for investigation and whether it should be referred to a Panel of Adjudication. We also provide confidential legal information about human rights.



## Research

The Commission conducts research and shares information about equality, discrimination, and human rights in the Yukon and Canada.



## Policy Information

The Commission provides policy information to proactively help individuals, businesses, and organizations prevent discrimination, including harassment.



## Partnerships

The Commission partners proactively on projects and initiatives to improve the understanding of human rights in the Yukon.



# Co-Chairs' Message

“Governments have the main responsibility to protect human rights, but it takes collective efforts to make progress in realising those rights for everyone.”

—**United Nations Human Rights - Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Yukon Human Rights Commission wishes to gratefully acknowledge that we, Commission Members and staff alike, serve all people of the Yukon living and working on the traditional lands of fourteen Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous groups. This annual report is a reflection on the important strides and achievements of our valued staff and partners during our 2022 – 2023 reporting year and the recognition of the human rights challenges still before us all.

We must sadly recognize the harsh reality that in 2022-2023 our afflicted world seems to have become a place where human rights violations have dramatically increased. Whether this is seen in the brutality of war as in the Ukraine or Yemen, the repression of ethnic minorities in countries like Myanmar or China, the overt denial of opportunities because of sexual orientation or gender identity in Afghanistan or Uganda, or in the more subtle erosion of basic human rights protections in the culture battles going on around us, the cumulative impact of all of this weakens the fabric of universality, interdependence, and indivisibility of human rights globally.

Our future is fraught with other warning signs such as emerging technologies that threaten human rights with mass privacy intrusions or the repression of dissenting voices. The convergence of planetary crises of climate change, pollution and nature loss represented an enormous threat to human rights globally. Growing economic inequality within and among countries also weakens societal stability and human rights promotion. State sponsored terrorism and the violence of extremists can also be counted as a menace to global human rights. All these bring suffering in their train and all that this may mean for the basic human rights of those most afflicted.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

—**Nelson Mandela**

This is not a time to despair. Here in the Yukon, the Yukon Human Rights Commission is called upon to promote and defend human rights. We have continued our crucial education and outreach efforts. We have provided high quality training workshops, assisted policy reviews for government departments, and aided businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the pursuit of human rights goals. The Workplace Sexual Harassment (WSH) project has been a key part of our human rights promotion efforts. This five-year programme with funding from Justice Canada, is drawing to a close. The success of this Yukon Human Rights Commission’s initiative, A Yukon Without Workplace Sexual Harassment, in raising awareness, improving knowledge, skills and capacity for Yukoners to take action on sexual harassment in the workplace along with other human rights promotion efforts, is evident. More and more government and civil society bodies are requesting input on this and other key issues.

The profile of the Yukon Human Rights Commission has deepened in our territory. Increasingly Yukoners have come to know their rights and are accessing them. This is clearly demonstrable in the rising number of people accessing other Commission services such as the human rights complaint process. To continue to be credible the Yukon Human Rights Commission must address our own shortcomings. Adequate staffing and sustainable funding to meet rising demand is needed in order to ensure that rights can be even more vigorously promoted and accessed in a timely manner. William E Gladstone’s famous quote “Justice delayed is justice denied” is as true now as it was a century and a half ago. Striving to foster a human rights-based ethos here whether in government or civil society ultimately serves to strengthen human rights not only in the Yukon but also across Canada and around the world.

“The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

—**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

This year many more human rights challenges have come to light in the Yukon. These challenges have sparked questions that we are beginning to explore: Is our territory wide housing crisis being seen through a human rights lens? Are First Nation's citizens being adequately served when outside of the Yukon human rights jurisdiction? In 2022, Jack Ball, our intern from McGill University, identified for us that First Nations citizens often cannot fully access the human rights available to Canadian citizens generally. "What we need most of all is a decolonized, democratic process that gives Indigenous communities agency over human rights, recognizing that "human rights are political: the shared exercise of citizenship." This study should assist the Commission in pursuing ways to address systemic change, restorative justice, and the whole process of decolonizing our practices as part of a larger reconciliation effort.

Another key question for the Commission: How is growing societal inequality affecting people here? As the United Nations points out in its *Inequality – Bridging the Divide* "Inequalities of opportunity affect a person's life expectancy and access to basic services such as healthcare, education, water, and sanitation. They can curtail a person's human rights, through discrimination, abuse, and lack of access to justice." What about the rights of women, children, and immigrants? Are they being adequately protected? The list of concerns goes on. They all demand our **collective efforts** in order to strive towards the realization of equal rights for everyone.

As members of the Yukon Human Rights Commission, we remain steadfastly dedicated to our fundamental mandate to promote and defend human rights here in the Yukon. We finally would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our dedicated staff for their unstinting efforts in striving towards our goals and give a special acknowledgement to Karen Moir for her exceptional service to the Commission from 2016 to 2022.

**Keely Bass**  
*Co-Chair*

**Michael Dougherty**  
*Co-Chair*







# Director's Message

I am honoured to have entered my third and final year of service as Director of Human Rights. As noted in the message of the co-chairs, this year was marked by a number of events and challenges that impacted many communities in the territory.

In March 2023, the Commission held its second, and final, conference on Workplace Sexual Harassment entitled *Your Part*. The Conference was a resounding success and the Commission was pleased to see significant engagement with this conference from communities, businesses, all levels of government and other stakeholders. As a result of this heightened level of engagement, the Commission received an increased number of inquiries and complaints; we also experienced a higher demand for our training and policy review services from sectors wanting to ensure compliance with the *Act*. I am pleased to say that the Commission was able to meet

these increased demands without compromising the high level of service delivery that we endeavour to provide. Commission staff worked harder on the frontlines to ensure that our services met the expectations of the public; for this I offer my highest praise.

The Commission continued its engagement with the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA), of which we are a member. In particular, the Commission was a participant at the meeting of *Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for human rights*. We were pleased to advance the human rights interests of Yukoners at a national level and engage our counterparts from across the country.

The Commission has strengthened its relationship with key stakeholders in the areas of healthcare and housing. It is our hope that these

enhanced relationships will foster a human rights-centered approach to navigate critical challenges faced by all Yukoners. We hope that these efforts will translate into meaningful changes in the near future.

Finally, we continue to work with the Department of Justice to address the financial pressures that will ensue as the territory continues to grow in population. We are confident that the Department of Justice will ensure that human rights of Yukoners remain a priority and that the Commission will be able to meet increased demands with the highest level of efficiency, compassion and care.

It has been a privilege for myself and Commission-staff to serve the public in these interesting and challenging times. We aspire to maintain the confidence of the public in our undertakings and we look forward, as always, of honouring the trust reposed in us by the people of Yukon.

Humbly and with gratitude,

**Birju Dattani**

*Director of Human Rights*

# Commission News

## Commission Members

The Commission Members for 2022-2023 were:

**Michael Dougherty** (2018 - Present)

**Keely Bass** (2021 - Present)

**Aja Mason** (2022 - Present)

**Samantha Dawson** (2021 - Present)

**Rosemary Rowlands** (2021 - Present)

## McGill International Human Rights Interns

The Commission's partnership with the McGill International Human Rights Internship Program allows students to work for a three-month period and to earn credits towards the completion of their Bachelor of Common Law (BCL)/Juris Doctor (JD). In 2022-2023, the Yukon Human Rights Commission was fortunate enough to have one student intern. The student supported the Commission and familiarized themselves with the scope of human rights issues by assisting in the taking of inquiries and working with Legal Counsel to write legal memoranda.

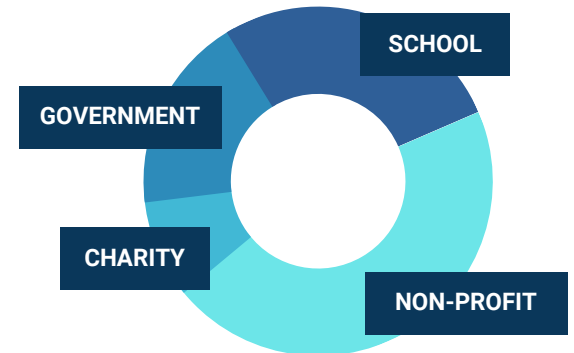


# Rights Promotion

## Trainings



## ORGANIZATION SECTORS



## Events



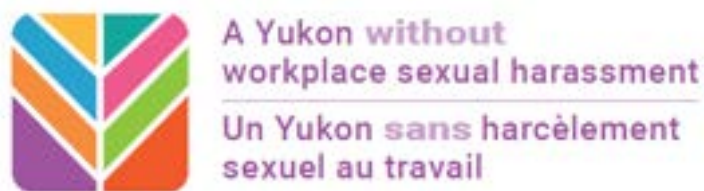
### International Human Rights Day 2022

The Commission hosted a free webinar on "Children and Human Rights Law: Lessons Learned from the Complainants in *Nazar and Siddique et al v Webber Academy Foundation*" to celebrate International Human Rights Day.

### Black History Month 2023

The Commission hosted a virtual movie screening of "The Road Taken" followed by a Q&A with the director of the film, Selwyn Jacob to celebrate Black History Month. "The Road Taken" is a nostalgic ride through the 1900s about Black sleeping-car porters working on the Canadian railways. The film explores how anti-Black racism and discrimination affected the car-porters' livelihoods, and their fight for justice.





**This year was marked by developments in community outreach through the arts, capacity building through events, and expanding public education.**

### Community Outreach & the Arts

In partnership with Gwaandak Theatre, two Commission staff toured high schools across the Yukon to support the Commission's partnership and education mandates. Students learned about workplace sexual harassment through:

- *The Crows*, a theatre production by Frances Koncan;
- A scripted talk-back of the theatre production; and
- Pre- and post-play information sessions provided by Commission and Gwaandak Theatre staff.

### Capacity Building & Events

Funded by the Department of Justice Canada, the Commission hosted *Y(our) Part: A Conference to Build Community Capacity to Address Sexual Harassment in Yukon Workplaces*. Held in Whitehorse in March 2023, over 100 attendees joined Commission staff and Commission Members to learn about workplace sexual harassment prevention, reaction, and eradication. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with attendees articulating that the conference increased their capacity to address workplace sexual harassment.

### Expanding Public Education

The Commission hosted trainings on workplace sexual harassment for over 7 different organizations. The Commission also incorporated more information about workplace sexual harassment into all settlement trainings as a preventive measure, even those primarily addressing subjects other than workplace sexual harassment.

*This project is funded by*



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada



# THE CROWS

by Frances Koncan

The Yukon Human Rights Commission, in partnership with Gwaandak Theatre, toured high schools in the Yukon to present *The Crows*, written by Frances Koncan. The play and partnership were part of the Commission's "A Yukon Without Workplace Sexual Harassment" project. It informed youth about their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace sexual harassment.

In addition to the play, Gwaandak Theatre and the Yukon Human Rights Commission provided youth with a pre- and post-show information session, and a scripted talkback of the play. This format ensured that youth had a consistent and comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace, providing youth the opportunity to engage with experts in human rights and workplace sexual harassment.



# Y(OUR) PART

*A Conference to Build Community Capacity to Address Sexual Harassment in Yukon Workplaces*



## CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND DUTIES AT WORK? WITH BIRJU DATTANI

QUEER AWARENESS AND INCLUSION TRAINING WITH FRED PIERRE

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION AND LISTENING TO DISCLOSURES WORKSHOP  
WITH CRICKETT WILDER

SAFE AT WORK - INTERSECTING EXPERIENCES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE  
IN THE WORKPLACE, WHAT'S GOING ON?! WITH BONNIE BRAYTON



## FOSTERING INNOVATION SESSIONS

THE VULNERABLE WORKERS PROTECTION SCHEME WITH ROWAN FISHER

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN DIFFERENT  
WORK SPACES WITH LIZ PEREDUN, COLIN WOLF, BROOKE RUDOLPH, AND  
JESSICA KISH

MOVING FORWARD THROUGH INNOVATIVE WAYS TO ADDRESS WORKPLACE  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT WITH LESLEY MCCULLOUGH, MICHAEL  
DEROSENROLL, ROWAN FISHER, JESSICA COLLIER, AND HEATHER ASHTHORN



## STORYTELLING SESSIONS

KEYNOTE SPEECH WITH ANNA MARIA TREMONTI

THE CROWS BY FRANCES KONCAN PERFORMANCE BY GWAANDAK THEATRE



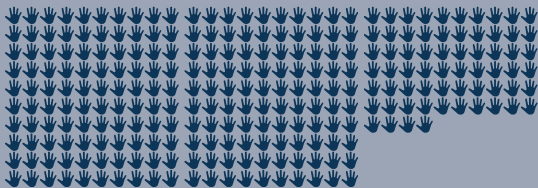


# BY THE NUMBERS

## 2022-2023

# 265

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF INQUIRIES



# 61

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
NEW COMPLAINTS



# 29

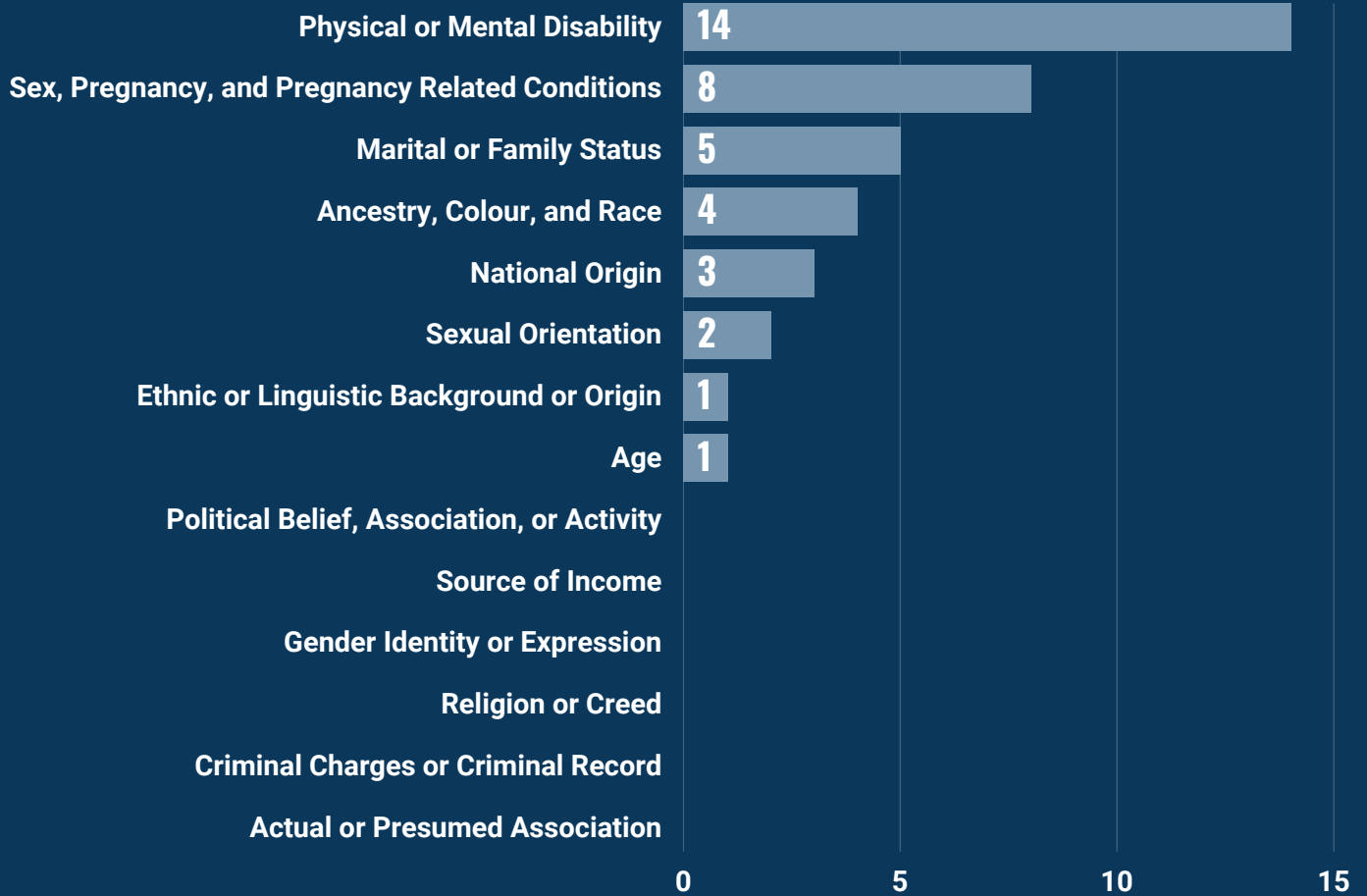
TOTAL NUMBER OF  
COMPLAINTS ACCEPTED



### Accepted Complaints Filed by Area



## COMPLAINTS FILED BY GROUND



5



*Complaints Withdrawn*

2



*Complaints Stopped by the Director*

2



*Dismissed by the Commission Members*

8



*Early Settlement*

2



*Referred to the Board then Settled*

2



*Referred to the Board for a Hearing*

31



*Complaints Not Accepted*





# Budget

## 2022-2023

REVENUE	21/22	22/23
Yukon Government	\$708,000	\$658,000
Government of Canada and Other Grants	\$509,309	\$481,617
Expense Recovery and Other Income	\$21	\$1,521
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,217,330</b>	<b>\$1,141,138</b>
EXPENSES	21/22	22/23
Operations*	\$401,174	\$402,868
Staff	\$717,953	\$797,163
Commission Members	\$16,789	\$20,914
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,135,916</b>	<b>\$1,220,945</b>

\* Operational expenses include administration, research, complaints management, and public education







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