



January 22, 2021

**Sent via email**

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Nicole Danjai Freeborn Bresser  
Ministry of Attorney General  
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Dear Dean and Nicole:

**Re: 2021 Mandate for Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee**

Thank you for agreeing to accept the appointment as Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee for 2021.

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and the Terms of Reference along with the particular priorities outlined below should guide the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee in its work this year.

The mandate from the Terms of Reference for the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee is:

*The mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee is to provide guidance and advice to the Law Society of British Columbia on legal issues affecting Indigenous people in the province, including those highlighted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report and Recommendations, such as: Indigenous laws, the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Aboriginal rights and title (including treaty rights), issues concerning jurisdictional responsibility for Indigenous people, child welfare, overrepresentation of Indigenous people in custody and the need for enhanced restorative justice programs, and the disproportionate victimization of Indigenous women and girls.*

I expect that you will guide the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee in its work over the year in a manner that reflects its terms of reference, the Benchers Code of Conduct and the Benchers governance policies regarding committees, always ensuring we remain committed to

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evidence-based decision-making that takes into consideration the impacts of policies on our members and the public and that we act in the public interest.

In particular, please keep in mind that the Benchers have directed that:

- a) Bencher committees are to help the Benchers do their job, not to help the staff do its jobs. Committees ordinarily will assist the Benchers by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Bencher deliberation.
- b) Bencher committees do not exercise authority over staff.
- c) In keeping with the Benchers' broader focus, Bencher committees will normally not have direct dealings with current staff operations.

I expect you and the members of Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee to work in a professional and respectful manner with the staff assigned to support the Advisory Committee.

During 2021, I would like to see the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee make substantial progress on the following priorities:

1. *Provide advice to Benchers on how best to advance the objective of increasing the representation and retention of Indigenous lawyers in senior positions throughout the justice system, including the judiciary.*
2. *Provide advice and assistance to Benchers with respect to engaging education providers, including the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the First Nations Schools Association, the Métis Nation of British Columbia, the BC School Trustees Association, and government on increasing awareness within Indigenous communities, and support for, the pursuit of careers in law and the wider justice system.*
3. *Review and provide advice regarding the finalization of the content of the Law Society's proposed Indigenous Cultural Competency program.*

As Chair of Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee, please ensure that all members of the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee understand they are expected to abide by the Bencher Code of Conduct and the Law Society's workplace policies and that the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee is expected to act within its Terms of Reference.

I look forward to hearing about the work of Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee over the balance of the year and trust that you and the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee will make substantial progress on the priorities in this letter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Lawton". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dean Lawton, QC  
President, Law Society of BC