For Immediate Release

Vancouver Transformative Justice Lauds BC UNDRIP Legislation

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(Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories) Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society (VATJSS) is congratulating the Province of British Columbia today for introducing legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“We are very pleased that the Province has worked with the First Nations Leadership Council on legislation that will be fundamental to integrating the principles of the UN Declaration into BC government policy and legislation,” says Jenna Forbes, VATJSS Executive Director. “BC deserves credit for its leadership in being the first among the provinces and territories to put forward this important legislation.”

Two articles of the UN Declaration affirm the right of Indigenous peoples to develop and implement their own justice systems guided by traditional principles.

For more than 25 years, Indigenous Justice Programming has been fostered in Canada by the Department of Justice through its Indigenous Justice Programs, (formerly the Aboriginal Justice Strategy). Twenty-eight of those programs are in BC, with VATJSS as the flagship justice program serving the diverse Indigenous people who call Metro Vancouver home.

“Given that the administration of justice is a provincial responsibility and the UN Declaration recognizes the importance of Indigenous control over Indigenous justice processes, the province has an important opportunity to help transform the way Indigenous communities interact with justice processes, and make movement towards reconciling many years of injustice to Indigenous People of Canada” says Forbes. “We look forward to the province rightfully returning to Indigenous communities the ability to administer their justice aspirations through significant and stable support that reflects the extent of Indigenous involvement in justice processes.”

National evaluations show community-based Indigenous Justice Programs are more effective with Indigenous people in conflict with the law than the Canadian justice system when it comes to reducing recidivism and building community, while achieving those results at lower cost.

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