

# **The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project**

## **INTERIM REPORT**

### **Community consultations on police services to members of racialized groups in Winnipeg**

**November 2007**

**The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project  
A partnership of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and  
University of Winnipeg**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Winnipeg Police Service has the responsibility of providing its services in an impartial manner, and in particular, without regard to a person's race or ancestry. This interim report, provides information on the Racialized Communities and Police Services Project ("RCAPS Project"), a research partnership between the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and the University of Winnipeg, and presents the results of its first project, the Community Consultations Project.

A total of four community consultations were held. The first consultation was with representatives of community-based organizations involved with members of racialized groups in Winnipeg. It sought to gather information about perceptions of bias in police services to members of the organizations consulted. Three additional consultations were held in neighbourhoods in the centre and north areas of Winnipeg, where individual participants shared their stories and observations with respect to the provision of police services to themselves and other neighbourhood residents.

Major themes which emerged from the consultation with community-based organizations were the fear that many members of racialized communities have of the police, the importance of anti-racism education, the need for more Winnipeg Police Service resources for cross-cultural training and community outreach and the need for a more effective public complaints mechanism than the Law Enforcement Review Agency.

These themes were also predominant in the stories and views shared by individual participants at the three consultations held in neighbourhoods.

Other themes of individual presentations were the lack of police services to the Aboriginal community, the abusive treatment by police based on Aboriginal ancestry, the need for community-based policing, the systemic nature of racial bias in the Winnipeg police service, the perception by police and media that groups of members of racialized groups are gang members, and sexually abusive treatment of Aboriginal women by police.

## **I. Introduction**

Manitoba's police forces are responsible for protecting lives and property, preventing and detecting offences, and preserving peace and order.

The officers of the Winnipeg Police Service vow to discharge these duties “in a just, impartial, and reasonable manner, preserving the equality, rights and privileges of citizens as afforded by law.”<sup>1</sup> Members also pledge acceptance “that all persons rich or poor, old or young, learned or illiterate, are equally entitled to courtesy, understanding and compassion”. Through their Code of Ethics, they resolve to “not be disparaging of any race, creed, or class of people.”<sup>2</sup>

From time to time, in Winnipeg<sup>3</sup> and across the country, however, allegations that police have failed to provide services in a bias-free manner continue to be made. In Manitoba, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry<sup>4</sup> was established following the 1987 trial of two men for the 1971 murder of a young Aboriginal woman, Helen Betty Osborne<sup>5</sup>, and the fatal shooting a few months later of J.J. Harper, executive director of the Island Lake Tribal Council, by a member of the Winnipeg Police<sup>6</sup>. The relationship between police services and Aboriginal people was a major theme of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

During the summer of 2005, the Centennial Neighbourhood Safety Committee in Winnipeg informed the Manitoba Human Rights Commission about their concerns that police services in their area were biased based on race (Aboriginal ancestry). The Centennial Neighbourhood Safety Committee was concerned about the treatment by police of Aboriginal residents in their neighbourhood who had contact with the police. Committee members were also concerned about the lack of crime prevention services in their neighbourhood and about the police response to calls for service from area residents. They were exploring constructive ways to take action to address their concerns.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is responsible for ensuring compliance with *The Human Rights Code*, as well as promoting human rights and educating about human rights. Services, including police services, are activities protected under *The Human Rights Code*. Ancestry, including colour and perceived race, is one of the protected grounds. The Commission can accept and investigate human rights complaints that allege discrimination in the provision of police services on the basis of ancestry.

The persons who brought their concerns forward chose not to file a formal human rights complaint at that time, but asked the Commission to examine their concerns. The Commission

partnered with independent researchers from the University of Winnipeg to look at the issues raised.

This interim report summarizes the steps that the Commission and its research partners from the University of Winnipeg have taken to date. It begins by describing the formation of the Racialized Communities and Police Services (“RCAPS”) Project, its members and Advisory Group. It discusses the use of the terms “racial profiling”, “racialized groups” and “bias-free policing”. It provides information about the community consultations it has held to date and gives examples of incidents that were brought forward during the consultations. It comments on the dialogue to date and outlines the next projects that the RCAPS Project hopes to undertake.

## **II. The Formation of the Racialized Communities and Police Services Project (“RCAPS Project”)**

In June of 2005, representatives of a neighbourhood safety committee brought their concerns about policing in their neighbourhood to the Commission’s attention. They believed that there was racial profiling on the basis of Aboriginal ancestry in the provision of police services to area residents. They did not want to file a human rights complaint at that time, but asked the Commission to look into their concerns.

In July 2005 the Commission met with faculty members of the University of Winnipeg (“U of W”) to discuss possible research projects to examine the concerns raised by the neighbourhood safety committee about racial profiling in the provision of police services in their area. The faculty members expressed an interest in carrying out a research project to examine racial profiling by the Winnipeg Police Service and to identify strategies that would strengthen the bias-free provision of police services.

In September 2005, the Issues & Communications Committee of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission met and discussed the concerns raised by the neighbourhood safety committee regarding the provision of police services to area residents. The Issues & Communications Committee supported trying to obtain data regarding racial profiling in the provision of police services.

Commission representatives continued to meet with U of W researchers to discuss possible research projects.

The Commission invited then Chief Ewatski of the Winnipeg Police Service to meet with representatives of the Commission and the U of W to discuss issues with respect to bias-free policing and to explore the possibility of collaborating in a research project to evaluate whether there was any bias based on race in the provision of police services. This meeting was held on October 4, 2005. The Chief of Police later declined the invitation to partner with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and the University of Winnipeg in this research project.

Representatives of the Commission and the U of W established the Racialized Communities and Police Services Project ("RCAPS Project"). The neighbourhood safety committee was kept informed of developments by Jerry Woods, then Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

### **III. RCAPS Project Committee**

The members of the RCAPS Project Committee are:

- Jerry Woods, Chairperson, Manitoba Human Rights Commission;
- Dr. Sandra Kirby, Acting Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (former Chair, Department of Sociology), University of Winnipeg;
- Dr. Mary Young, Director, Aboriginal Student Services, Department of Education, University of Winnipeg;
- Dianna Scarth, Executive Director, Manitoba Human Rights Commission;
- Yvonne Peters, Vice-chairperson, Manitoba Human Rights Commission;
- Patricia Knipe, Communications Director, Manitoba Human Rights Commission; and
- Debra Beauchamp, Policy and Program Analyst, Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

The Committee has also been assisted by Marina de Luna, Research Administration Officer, University of Winnipeg and George Sarides, Assistant Director, Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Helmut-Harry Loewen, Faculty Member, Department of Sociology, University of Winnipeg. The students who took notes at the community consultations were Ashley Samaha, and Janet Mowat.

### **IV. RCAPS Advisory Committee**

Members of the Advisory Committee to the RCAPS Project are:

- Janet Baldwin, former Chair of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission
- Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg;
- Art Shofley, Aboriginal Elder;
- David Northcott, Executive Coordinator of Winnipeg Harvest Food Bank; and
- Suni Matthews, Principal, Dufferin School;

Individual members of the Advisory Committee have provided counsel to the RCAPS Project Committee and have assisted with the Community Consultation Project by chairing or attending the discussions. The Advisory Committee also held its first meeting with the RCAPS Project Committee on November 14, 2007.

### **V. Meaning of the Terms "racial profiling", "bias-free" and "racialized communities"**

There are many definitions of "racial profiling". The RCAPS Committee's working understanding of this term has been informed by the definition used by the Ontario Human

Rights Commission. That definition sets out that racial profiling encompasses any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, place of origin, or combination of these, rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual or group for greater scrutiny or different treatment.<sup>7</sup>

The "**bias-free**" provision of police services is the provision of police services to individuals and communities in an equitable manner, without detriment on the basis of characteristics such as race, religion, place of origin, age, sex, disadvantaged social or economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity, or disability.

"**Racialized communities**" is used by the RCAPS Project Committee instead of terms such as "visible minorities", "persons of colour" or "non-white persons". The term "racialized communities" conveys that it is a social construct to view persons or groups who share (or are perceived to share) a given ancestry as different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life, and that this view is not based in reality.<sup>8</sup>

## **VI. Development of Project Proposals**

The RCAPS Project Committee explored a wide range of possible research projects regarding the protection of human rights in the provision of policing services in Manitoba. After developing a list of possible projects, the Committee identified those that it hoped to proceed with.

The projects identified were those that could assist in determining the presence of any bias in police services to racialized communities, provide information as to the context of any racial profiling in policing, and identify positive approaches and models of policing that support bias-free policing services. The identified projects were also not reliant on the cooperation and participation of the Winnipeg Police Service.

The Committee decided to begin with the Community Consultation Project. The Community Consultation Project would help determine the scope of any problem of racial profiling in the provision of police services in Winnipeg and provide information about the concerns citizens have about the provision of police services to members of racialized groups.

## **VII. RCAPS Project Funding**

A number of grant proposals to fund the research projects identified by the RCAPS Project Committee have been submitted.

To date, the RCAPS Project Committee has received \$2000.00 as a strategic grant from the University of Winnipeg to fund the initial project, the Community Consultation Project.

In addition, the RCAPS Project Committee is one of the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) partners in the successful grant application of the Canadian Centre for Policy

Alternatives – Manitoba (CCPA-MB), to conduct research on the theme of “Transforming Aboriginal and Inner-City Communities”. The RCAPS Project Committee, represented by Dr. Sandra Kirby, became a community partner in the spring 2007 grant application. Investigators are Dr. Jim Silver, Dr. Elizabeth Comack, Dr. Parvin Ghoryashi and Dr. John Loxley.

"Policing inner-city and Aboriginal Communities" (RCAPS projects) was identified as one of several projects within the “justice, safety and security theme” chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Comack. Research proposals for RCAPS Projects are now being discussed and time lines set. The CURA grant is for 2007-2010.

## **VIII. The Community Consultation Project**

### **A. The Scope and Objectives of the Community Consultation Project**

Through the Community Consultation Project, the RCAPS Project Committee sought to gather information from representatives of community-based organizations in Winnipeg as to perceptions about any bias in police services to their members, as well as to obtain accounts from individual members of racialized groups in Winnipeg as to their experiences with the City of Winnipeg Police Service.

Community consultations were planned in the neighbourhood whose residents had approached the Commission about concerns of bias in policing and in neighbourhoods where the community organizations who participated in the initial roundtable discussion were active. These neighbourhoods were in the centre and north areas of Winnipeg. A total of four community consultations were held between October 19, 2006 and August 8, 2007.

The confidentiality and anonymity of individual participants who shared their observations and stories in the community consultations held in Winnipeg neighbourhoods were respected.

The RCAPS Project Committee did not investigate individual stories, whether of allegations of racial profiling or of accounts of police services provided in a bias-free manner. Rather, the RCAPS Project Committee engaged in a serious listening exercise and has built a narrative analysis as a result.

Wherever possible, neighbourhood organizations were involved in organizing the community consultations, which were held in accessible venues in their neighbourhoods. Childcare and light meals were provided. Notes of presentations were recorded by two research students hired by the RCAPS Project Committee.

### **B. The Roundtable Discussion with Representatives of Community-based Organizations and the Winnipeg Police Service**

On October 19, 2006, the first of RCAPS series of community consultations was held. It took place in the boardroom at the Manitoba Human Rights Commission office in Winnipeg<sup>9</sup>. The RCAPS Project Committee sought to gather information from representatives of community-based organizations in Winnipeg as to perceptions about any bias in police services to their

members, as well as facilitate dialogue on this issue with the Winnipeg Police Service. Information on the RCAPS Project accompanied the invitation to participate in the roundtable discussion.<sup>10</sup>

More than 30 representatives of community-based organizations, together with Chief Ewatski and other representatives of the Winnipeg Police Service, met with RCAP Project Committee members for the Roundtable Discussion. Janet Baldwin, then Chair of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, chaired the discussion.

Community organizations that were represented included the African Community Organizations of Manitoba Inc., Centennial Neighbourhood, Ka Ni Kanichihk and the United Against Racism “Aboriginal Youth Centre”.<sup>11</sup>

In open discussion, various community groups stressed the importance of anti-racism education, and the need for more police service resources for cross-cultural training and community outreach. They shared stories from their communities about experiences with the police.

Chief Ewatski of the Winnipeg Police Service acknowledged that mistrust existed between some community members and some members of the Winnipeg Police Service and said that the discussion was an opportunity to obtain advice and guidance from the community to find ways to alleviate that mistrust. He said that an understanding of police duties and procedures was important and that often the community did not understand the roles and duties of modern police.

Major themes which emerged from the representatives of community organizations were the fear that many members of racialized communities have of the police, the importance of anti-racism education, the need for more Police Service resources for cross-cultural training and community outreach and the need for a more effective public complaints mechanism.

The following examples of participant’s comments illustrate these themes.

**Fear of police:**

- *There is a focus on “safe neighbourhoods”, but in this neighbourhood, the community is more afraid of the police than of crime.*
- *Persons who come to Winnipeg as refugees from war-affected countries are often traumatized by experiences with policing in their past and are terrified of police. This can cause a bias against the Winnipeg Police Service. Cultural sensitivity is vitally important when dealing with refugees from war-affected countries.*

**The importance of anti-racism education:**

- *Accountability and sensitivity training regarding anti-racism, multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity by the Winnipeg Police Service would improve relationships with the community.*

- *Francophone immigrants from Africa are frequently discriminated against by the Winnipeg Police Service because it does not understand them or the culture that they are coming from.*

**The need for more Police Service resources for cross-cultural training and community outreach:**

- *There is a need for ongoing dialogue between the Winnipeg Police Service and the community.*
- *The Winnipeg Police Service needs to communicate with the leaders of immigrant community groups. Often immigrants will trust community leaders more than they will the Winnipeg Police Service. If a person has a community leader they can call when they have a situation with the Winnipeg Police Service, that leader can assist the Winnipeg Police Service in communicating with the person who does not understand the Winnipeg Police Service or their role in our society. A community leader can do much to diffuse a situation when the immigrant simply does not understand.*

**The need for a more effective public complaints mechanism:**

- *LERA (Law Enforcement Review Agency) is not trusted by the Aboriginal community. Many have a lack of faith in an organization that investigates itself, as the Winnipeg Police Service does.*
- *Our neighbourhood group has started to collect information from the community, to record experiences that are brought to us by the community with respect to the Winnipeg Police Service, both good and bad.*
- *There is a current lack of ability to ask questions. We would like to see more options than dealing with LERA when profiling does happen.*

All of the participants at the roundtable discussion agreed to issue a joint statement about the roundtable discussion in the form of a press release, which was sent out November 15, 2006. The press release announced the establishment of the RCAPS Project and reported on the roundtable discussion.<sup>12</sup>

**C. Community Consultation – West Broadway Neighbourhood, Downtown East, Winnipeg**

On February 27, 2007 the RCAPS Project Committee held a community consultation at Crossways-in-Common at 222 Furby Street. Crossways-in-Common is in the West Broadway neighbourhood of Winnipeg's Downtown East. 27.5% of neighbourhood residents are Aboriginal (in Winnipeg, 8.6% of residents are Aboriginal) and an additional 15% are members of other visible minority groups (in Winnipeg, 13.4%).<sup>13</sup> In 2000, the incidence of low-income economic families<sup>14</sup> was 54.5% (Winnipeg, 15.5%).<sup>15</sup>

The West Broadway Development Corporation assisted with the organization of the community consultation. Its Good Food Club<sup>16</sup> prepared a supper of sandwiches, salad and refreshments.

Notices about the community consultation were distributed in the area, and backgrounder documents were made available.<sup>17</sup> Janet Baldwin, then Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, facilitated the discussion. About 25 people attended.

Major themes of the stories and views which participants shared were the systemic nature of racial bias in the Winnipeg Police Service, the need for community policing, perception by police and media that groups of members of racialized groups are gang members, racial bias in police response to requests for service and in contacts with police, need to educate members of racialized communities about their rights and the need for change in the police service. Examples of these themes and views follow.

### **Systemic nature of racial bias in the Winnipeg Police Service:**

- *There are entrenched attitudes against Aboriginals and now black people. The police resistance to changing attitudes towards poor people and minorities is deeply rooted. Recruits quickly just get eaten up by the system. They start off with good intentions.*
- *There must be internal support in the force in order to get things to change.*
- *It is not just a few bad apples. This problem is part of the police culture. We must have mandatory anti-racism training for officers.*

### **The need for community policing:**

- *The police say that community policing already exists, but only token efforts are made. There is no consistency in trying to relate to the community. The community just wants a healthy relationship with the police.*
- *The police need to do foot patrols and learn who lives in the community.*
- *They need to get involved and be proactive, not reactive. We need community policing and mobilization, but with things like "Operation Clean Sweep" we are going in the opposite direction.*

### **Perception by police and media that groups of members of racialized groups are gang members:**

- *The media makes assumptions that groups of Aboriginals and blacks are in gangs, especially if they are young, though culturally they are more group-based, which the police and dominant culture in general don't understand.*
- *Young Africans are being treated brutally and the police seem to look at black people as a threat to their work. When three or four Sudanese boys walk together down the street, the police ambush them and try to intimidate them. They immediately ask "Where are you from?" assuming that they are not Canadian. This frightens and intimidates new immigrants who don't know the culture or what rights they have. Police also assume that you are in a gang if you are in a group.*

### **Racial bias in police response to requests for service and in contacts with police:**

- *My friend was walking down the street and was attacked by three men. He ran into a store and called the cops. The police never showed up because he had a strong African accent. Police don't come if you have an accent, or if they do come, it's ten hours later. Something is wrong with the system that has to change.*
- *I was with an Aboriginal friend, driving down Sargent. Police tailed us to a building where we were picking up another friend. They asked if my friend if he lived in the building. They asked for his license and then let him go. I think that they pulled us over because I am black and he is Aboriginal. It happened to me another time when I was in a car with another black guy. The police pulled us over, checked my license. I confronted the officer and asked "Why are you doing this?" The officer got defensive and said he was just doing his job.*

### **The need to educate members of racialized communities about their rights:**

- *Spence neighbourhood residents are less educated and don't know their rights. The authorities take advantage of this ignorance and many have been beaten up by the police, especially Aboriginal and black men.*
- *Refugee students may not realize not to buy things on the street because it may be stolen. The police arrested one student for buying a stolen bike on the street. He didn't know it was stolen because where he is from they buy everything on the street. The police were rough with him and impatient with his lack of English.*
- *We must teach new immigrants their rights and how people here work.*

### **The need for change in the police service:**

- *Police need to learn about other cultures to understand why certain people do certain things.*
- *We must question why there aren't police from all groups. We need to help members of minority communities to get qualifications to join the police force.*
- *The police need to have workshops within communities to listen to the community. We must have community understanding on both sides.*
- *We as citizens must be allowed to know about police policies and protocols. Who designs the training for new recruits? Do new recruits need anti-racism training instead of just cultural diversity training?*
- *Police want to push for longer incarceration but they won't even hold themselves accountable for their own racial profiling.*
- *There should be cameras around the police cars to get video footage.*

### **D. Community Consultation: Centennial Neighbourhood, Downtown East, Winnipeg**

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the RCAPS Project Committee held a community consultation at Dufferin School at 545 Alexander, Winnipeg. Dufferin School is in the Centennial Neighbourhood of Downtown East, Winnipeg. 49.9% of neighbourhood residents are Aboriginal, and an additional 24.9% are members of other visible minority groups. In 2000, the incidence of low-income economic families<sup>18</sup> was 60.7%.<sup>19</sup>

The meeting was held from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Centennial Neighbourhood Safety Committee helped to organize the meeting and the supper. Diane Roussin, Project Coordinator, Centennial Neighbourhood Project, and Cheyenne Chartrand, Centennial Safety Coordinator were key organizers of the event. After a supper of bannock and chili, and a drumming welcome the Allison Cook drumming group. Jerry Woods, then Vice-Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, and a member of the Couchiching First Nation, chaired the meeting. About 50 people (not counting the children) were in attendance. Attendees were primarily members of racialized groups; most were Aboriginal women.

Participants were asked if they thought that the provision of police services to racialized groups in the Centennial area was an issue. They were also invited to share personal experiences with police in the Centennial area.

The major themes of the stories and views which participants shared were dissatisfaction with LERA (Law Enforcement Review Agency), mistrust of police, lack of police services to the Aboriginal community, abusive treatment by police and how to move forward. Examples that illustrate these themes follow.

#### **Dissatisfaction with LERA (Law Enforcement Review Agency):**

- *LERA is a farce. It makes a mockery of the justice system. I can't feel safe the way police are treating people right now.*
- *Police brutality occurs. There is no question. LERA is useless; it doesn't do what it is supposed to do. People must document everything that happens to them. Aboriginals don't file complaints with LERA because they know nothing will get done. We must maintain our own files and track certain officers.*

#### **Lack of police services to the Aboriginal community:**

- *There are not enough police. There is only one in this area.*
- *I don't feel safe in Winnipeg, especially in this area. Response to First Nations is not a priority, unless they're causing trouble.*
- *I am sad about the safety of our kids. I can't call 911 if something happens. There is nowhere to turn for Aboriginal people when something happens.*

#### **Mistrust of police**

- *There is a big hole in trust. The police here need to be retrained. We don't necessarily need more, but they need to fix their attitude. They judge people by their race. Aboriginal people are being identified and judged in their cars, homes, etc.*
- *Any place in the North End, the police identify Aboriginals walking or in cars and assume they are no good. There is no trust for police.*
- *My daughter wants to be a police officer. I want to support her, but I am worried for her. I am worried she will be so systematized that she'll turn her back on her people. I am very leery. Does their training ruin them? How can I guide her into the future that she wants?*
- *One time, my nephew jumped the fence into my yard, and I flipped out. I told him never to do that, or to run to the bus, because the police will get the wrong impression.*

### **Abusive treatment by police**

- *The police put me into their car for no reason. I started laughing because I had done nothing wrong. They hit me with a black jack. I have no respect for the police since that time.*
- *The police snapped my fingers, fractured my face and body, and blinded me. I got tasered and the police were laughing the whole time. I feel like Aboriginals have no rights and are treated like nothing. The police are untouchable and are the most organized gang in the nation. They lie for each other, they lie to the country.*
- *In 2005, after Dumas,<sup>20</sup> I didn't think that any more bad stuff could happen. But then my daughter was handcuffed by six police officers on Selkirk. She was heading home from studying with a friend, and was stopped by police about half a block from home, at 2 a.m. They asked her for ID. She asked why and said that she didn't have any. They handcuffed her. She was left black, blue and yellow. I didn't know where she was until 10 the next day. She was bitten on her right arm. They beat her and swore at her, because she's an Aboriginal woman. She passed out, and was taken to Health Sciences Centre. She didn't want to do anything about it. It's hard to look at any police officers now. I'm angry. I want to look, see a human being behind the uniform. I'm trying to get over it.*
- *I can't sleep at night because of a fear of getting arrested. One night when I was younger an officer come into my room at night and put a gun to my head. I hadn't done anything and was just sleeping. I want to feel safe. We deserve respect because we pay their salaries.*

### **How to move forward:**

- *We need to be educated on how to talk to police officers. People can tell you how to be effective in dealing with police.*
- *My oldest daughter was at school and there was a police officer there. My kids see at home, in the community, on TV, that they should be afraid of police. This police resource officer program lets kids see police as human beings.*

- *We must have community policing with police that know us. We must mentor youth who are interested and groom the right type of people to become officers.*

## **E. Community Consultation: Lord Selkirk Park Neighbourhood, Point Douglas, Winnipeg**

On August 8, 2007 the RCAPS Project Committee held a community consultation at the Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre at 580 King Street, Winnipeg. Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre is in the Lord Selkirk Park Neighbourhood in the South Point Douglas area of the north end of Winnipeg. 54.9% of the neighbourhood's population is Aboriginal, and an additional 9.3% are members of other visible minority groups. In 2000, the incidence of low-income economic families<sup>21</sup> was 76.7%.<sup>22</sup>

The meeting was held from 5:00 p.m. to approximately 8:00 p.m. Aboriginal Visioning For the North End<sup>23</sup> assisted with organizing and hosting the meeting and its project coordinator, Darlene Klyne, co-hosted the meeting. After a supper of stew and bannock, Jerry Woods, then Vice-Chairperson of The Manitoba Human Rights Commission, and a member of the Couchiching First Nation, facilitated the sharing circle. About 50 people were in attendance. Most participants were Aboriginal women.

Major themes of the stories and views which participants shared were the abusive treatment by police of themselves, relatives or neighbours based on Aboriginal ancestry, mistrust of police and the lack of police services for Aboriginal persons, and the need for community-based policing. Examples that illustrate these themes follow.

### **Abusive treatment by police based on Aboriginal ancestry**

- *I was driven to the perimeter by police and left to walk home barefoot. I have no one to complain to. Aboriginal people don't matter. I have no trust in the police.*
- *My first experience with the police was seeing my dad being taken away. The police used excessive violence.*
- *When my brothers were aged 11 and 12, they were routinely picked up by police and taken to Transcona, where their shoes were taken away and they were left to walk home barefoot. We told our mother. She was angry and frustrated and would cry. She didn't know what to do, so she internalized the pain.*
- *I renovate houses. Two months ago, my carpenter and I were heading to a house that we were working on around Selkirk Avenue. Four police cars followed our car, boxed us in, and claimed that they had heard a complaint about suspicious men driving around Selkirk. A minority spot check.*

### **Mistrust of police and the lack of police services for Aboriginal persons**

- *Where are the police where when young girls are being dropped off by men on the corner?*
- *A few nights ago, a community garden that I helped plant was destroyed by three kids under the age of 12. They also broke some windows. I called the police and they still*

*haven't contacted me. There is no respect from police for efforts to make the area better. You can't count on the police.*

- *Women are questioned by police on why they stay with men who abuse them. There is no compassion. It is hard to talk about being abused. When authority figures belittle you when you do seek help, it feels frustrating and feels like there is no help out there for women.*
- *I don't know how to guide women when they are experiencing violence. When they call for help, the police do checks on them, and if they have a past history, they are re-victimized by police.*
- *One time, I dropped my nine-year old daughter off at the babysitter's and she ran away. A pervert picked her up and she was missing until the next day. I called the police and they accused my daughter of lying to get out of trouble.*
- *I live on Magnus. My neighbours were broken into once. I called the police, and watched the robbers carry on for four hours. When the police eventually came, they were only responding to a domestic dispute up the street.*

### **Need for community-based policing**

- *We don't need more policing, we need peacekeeping, where police come into the community and become part of it. The police should get to know us and know what happens. Safety is not a personal issue, it's a community issue. We need to feel safe to walk down the street.*
- *The police should have more people walking around. They used to have a police officer walking around. He's gone now, and there are lots of gangsters walking around. I have to rely on my neighbours for my eyes.*

### **F. Additional Consultations and Presentations**

At the request of Aboriginal Visioning for the North End, an additional opportunity was provided for individuals who wished to share their stories and views on police services in a more private forum. On October 10, 2007 Jerry Woods, Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Dianna Scarth, Executive Director, met at Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre to provide this opportunity. One woman attended but decided to follow-up with staff of the Centre.

Three Aboriginal women later shared stories with a community worker, who forwarded them to Mr. Woods. Two were of sexual assault by police officers; the third was of an officer accepting an offer of sex in his cruiser car.

- *I was a lot younger and hadn't been in the city long. Like any other young person, I hung around Main when it was good to hang around there before it changed. Two officers put me in a car and took me outside of the city. I thought I'd done something wrong but didn't know why they were taking me out. They called someone on the radio and when we stopped somewhere outside Winnipeg another car pulled in. They raped me, took turns.*

- They were cruel and disgusting and when they were finished they left me there. I had to find my way back. I've never told this to anyone, but I could never trust a police officer.*
- *It wasn't that long ago, my friend and I lived on the street. I wasn't turning tricks; I just lived on the street. Two cops picked up my friend and me. I yelled at them. I told them we weren't hookers, so what were they doing? They drove us outside Winnipeg and took turns raping us. They took our jackets and our shoes and we had to walk back from past the perimeter.*
  - *I offered a cop a blow job and he took it – right there in the cruiser by the tracks.*

## **IX. Presentation before City of Winnipeg Chief of Police Recruitment Community Consultation Meeting**

Due to the retirement of Chief Ewatski, the City of Winnipeg began a recruitment process for the position of Chief of Police of the Winnipeg Police Service. RCAPS Committee members Jerry Woods, Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Dianna Scarth, Executive Director, attended the September 6, 2007 Community Consultation at R.B. Russell School in the North End of Winnipeg.

Mr. Woods presented their comments which describe the formation of the RCAPS Project and its public consultations.<sup>24</sup> He said that the successful candidate for Chief of police must respect diversity, have a proven track record in promoting the equitable provision of police services to all communities, a demonstrated commitment to bias-free policing practices and be prepared to make bias-free policing practices a priority by incorporating standards for same throughout the chain of command and the force.

## **X. RCAPS Project: Next steps**

The RCAPS Project Committee is considering a range of projects, including:

- reviewing reports in the public domain of incidents of racial profiling by members of the Winnipeg Police Service since 1988;
- researching bias-free policing strategies used by other police departments;
- further consultations with the community and the Winnipeg Police Service;
- researching effective anti-racist training programs in the policing context; and
- identifying opportunities in the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg Police Academy and programs such as the Criminal Justice Program at the University of Winnipeg for ongoing cross-cultural, human rights and other education and training that would best support the bias-free delivery of policing services.

## **XI. Acknowledgements**

The RCAPS Project Committee would like to thank all of those who assisted with the Community Consultation Project. In particular, we thank the members of the RCAPS Advisory Committee, the community organizations and individuals that assisted with the planning and

organizing of the community consultations, funders and all those who took the time to attend the Roundtable Discussion and the Community Consultation Meetings.

A special thank you is extended to those who shared their experiences and their thoughts about police services in Winnipeg and racial bias.

## **XII. Appendices**

### ***Appendix 'A' The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project: A Backgrounder; Addendum to Backgrounder; and Invitation to Roundtable Discussion***

**September 26, 2006**

#### ***The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project: A Backgrounder***

##### **1. What is "bias-free policing"?**

"Bias-free policing" is providing police and security services to all persons without unreasonable discrimination on the basis of ancestry (including colour and perceived race), national origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, family status, disadvantaged social or economic status, political belief or disability.

##### **2. What is the "Racialized Communities and Police Services Project"?**

The Racialized Communities and Police Services ("RCAPS") Project began as a project to examine concerns raised by members of a Neighbourhood Safety Committee in Winnipeg about bias in police services to Aboriginal residents in their neighbourhood. Its focus now includes police services to both Aboriginal residents and members of other racialized communities in Winnipeg.

(The term "racialized communities" is used instead of terms such as "visible minorities", "persons of colour" or "non-white". "Racialization" was defined in the Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System (1995) as: "... the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.")

##### **3. Why is the Manitoba Human Rights Commission involved?**

The Neighbourhood Committee informed the Manitoba Human Rights Commission about its concerns and asked the Commission to look into the issue of racial profiling by some members of the Winnipeg Police Service.

The responsibilities of The Manitoba Human Rights Commission include enforcing the anti-discrimination provisions of *The Human Rights Code*, as well as promoting human rights and acting in a proactive way to prevent human rights violations from occurring.

#### **4. Who is working on the RCAPS Project?**

The RCAPS Project Committee is made up of representatives of the University of Winnipeg (including Dr. Sandra Kirby, Chair, Department of Sociology, Dr. Mary Young, Director, Aboriginal Student Services, and Helmut-Harry Loewen, Faculty Member, Department of Sociology) and of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

An Advisory Committee is also being formed to provide guidance to the Project Committee.

#### **5. Who is on the Advisory Committee to the RCAPS Project?**

To date, Chairperson Janet Baldwin of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, Mr. Art Shofley, Aboriginal Elder, and Mr. David Northcott, Executive Coordinator, Winnipeg Harvest, have all agreed to serve on the Advisory Committee to the RCAPS Project.

#### **6. What were some of the concerns brought to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission about police services?**

The concerns of the Neighbourhood Safety Committee were focused on the treatment by police of Aboriginal residents in their neighbourhood who had contact with the police, the lack of crime prevention services in their neighbourhood, and the inadequacy of police response to calls for service from neighbourhood residents.

#### **7. Is the Winnipeg Police Service involved in the Project?**

The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project Committee had hoped to directly incorporate the perspectives and expertise of members of the Winnipeg Police Service into the Project. The Winnipeg Police Service was invited to join the RCAPS Project and assist with the development of research proposals and the conduct of the research. The Winnipeg Police Service has declined this invitation.

#### **8. What specific projects will the RCAPS Project undertake?**

The Project Committee has explored a range of research projects which would help to identify any problems with the equitable provision of policing services to racialized communities and which would be of assistance in developing strategies to support bias-free policing.

It has developed a number of proposals of projects that would determine the presence of any bias in the provision of police services to racialized communities, provide information about the context of racial profiling in policing, and identify positive approaches and models that support bias-free policing services. Grant applications to various funding bodies have been made or are planned.

The first step of the project is public consultations, including this Roundtable Discussion and a series of four community meetings.

## **Addendum to The Manitoba Human Rights Commission document "The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project: A Backgrounder"**

*The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination ("CERD") is a United Nations agreement which Canada has entered into.*

*Canada reports to the United Nations committee responsible for this Convention on a regular basis. Below is an excerpt from Canada's most recent report, which describes the measures adopted by Manitoba against the promotion of racism. It may provide some additional background to our roundtable discussion.*

### **Part IV – Measures Adopted by the Governments of the Provinces**

#### **Manitoba**

##### **Article 4: Prohibition against promotion of racism**

233. The Winnipeg Police Service Hate Crime team works closely with police and community organizations, Crown Counsel and affected individuals to respond to crimes motivated by hate and bias due to personal characteristics such as race, colour, and ethnicity. It uses a comprehensive approach which attempts to include the expertise and assistance of the Manitoba and Canadian Human Rights Commissions (the latter is especially important in the context of hate on the Internet), community groups, etc. It has held extensive training programs for the team and senior police officers, including a Hate Crimes & Human Rights Investigators course September 20-21, 2004.
234. Manitoba Justice is currently reviewing its policy on prosecutions for hate-related crime. Similarly, s. 18 of the Manitoba *Human Rights Code* is under review to determine whether it requires expansion.
235. Policing, in Manitoba, is carried out by municipal forces (the largest by far being Winnipeg Police Service -- WPS), or by the federally regulated Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) operating under contract. These law enforcement agencies make continued efforts to address and eliminate bias in policing, including racial profiling to the extent that term refers to actions by authorities based on unreasonable stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, etc. The WPS maintains a policy of Bias-free Policing. Training is provided to new police recruits and existing members in order to properly educate them on policy and ensure compliance. As well, if a member of the public feels he or she is being treated in a manner disclosing bias, he/she can file a complaint with the Law Enforcement Review Agency or the WPS Professional Standards Unit.

236. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) adopted a resolution regarding Bias-free Policing at its 2004 Annual Conference. As indicated by the CACP, the resolution "simply represents the current ethical practice of CACP members. However, as a formally written statement, it serves to emphasize the importance of Bias-free Policing, highlighting to the public the commitment of the CACP to principled policing".

237. Although there have been no specific complaints of racial profiling in Manitoba to date, instances of such activity could be the subject of a complaint under the *Human Rights Code*, in which event the practices, rules and policies in question would need to be justified under the rigorous standards that have been enunciated by the Supreme Court of Canada.

### **The Manitoba Human Rights Commission**

**invites you to a round table discussion**

**on bias-free policing.**

What are your organization's views on police services to members of racialized communities?

When: Thursday, October 19, 2006 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Where: The Manitoba Human Rights Commission Board Room, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 175 Hargrave St. Winnipeg

RSVP: by Thursday, October 12, 2006.

Please pre-register by calling Beatrice Watson

@ 945-7653 or email her at [bwatson@gov.mb.ca](mailto:bwatson@gov.mb.ca)

A light lunch will be provided.

For more information, please see the attached backgrounder and addendum to the Roundtable Discussion on bias-free policing.

**Appendix "B": News Release**

**NEWS RELEASE**

**November 15, 2006**

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Round table discussion takes place on bias-free policing**

Thirty representatives from nearly 20 community groups, neighbourhood associations, the University of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Police Service met recently at the Manitoba Human Rights Commission for a round table discussion on bias-free policing. The Commission announced the establishment of the Racialized Communities and Police Services Project (the "RCAPS Project"), a partnership with researchers from the University of Winnipeg to examine concerns brought to the Commission about police services to Aboriginal residents of a Winnipeg neighbourhood. The RCAPS Project Committee has developed a number of project proposals to help identify any problems in the provision of policing services to Aboriginal and visible minority communities, and to assist in developing strategies that support bias-free policing services.

In open discussion at the round table meeting, various community groups stressed the importance of anti-racism education, and the need for more Police Service resources for cross-cultural training and community outreach. They shared stories from their communities about experiences with the police. Winnipeg Chief of Police Jack Ewatski said, "I do not need to be convinced that mistrust exists between some community members and some members of the Winnipeg Police Service. I see this round table as an opportunity to obtain advice and guidance from the community to help find ways to alleviate that mistrust."

It was also agreed that it would be valuable for all the groups represented to meet periodically and share information, focusing on strategies to address reports or perceptions of bias in police services to racialized communities.

Grant applications to various funding bodies have been made for the RCAPS project. One grant already received will enable the committee to hold neighbourhood consultations to gather information from individuals about police services to members of racialized communities.

The roundtable discussion was the third in a series of public consultations held by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. The mandate of the Commission is to achieve equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination through the protection and promotion of human rights.

For more information please contact:

Patricia Knipe  
Communications Director  
945-5112  
or  
Winnipeg Police Service  
Office of the Chief of Police, 986-6037

The following groups, organizations and associations attending the Round Table

Discussion on Bias Free Policing, agreed to send out this joint news release,

1. Social Planning Council
2. Needs Centre for War Affected Children
3. Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties (MARL)
4. City of Winnipeg Police Service
5. ACOMI (African Community Organizations of Manitoba Inc.)
6. ACOMI (African Community Organizations of Manitoba Inc.) Secretariat
7. Centennial Neighbourhood Group
8. United Against Racism – Aboriginal Youth Circle
9. Ka Ni Kanichichk
10. Dufferin School
11. Helping Hands Resource Centre for Immigrants Inc.
12. Ifelodin Training and Developing Inc.
13. University of Winnipeg RCAPS Research Group
14. Amicale (The Congo Cultural Organization)
15. Welcome Place
16. Winnipeg Foundation Centennial Neighbourhood Project
17. Spence Neighbourhood Association

**Appendix "C":** *Presentation before Chief of Police Recruitment Community Consultation Meeting, September 6, 2007 R.B. Russell High School, 364 Dufferin Avenue.*

**Jerry Woods, Chairperson – Manitoba Human Rights Commission**

**Dianna Scarth, Executive Director – Manitoba Human Rights Commission**

**Community Consultation, R.B. Russell High School**

**September 6, 2007**

**Jerry Woods:**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jerry Woods, the Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and a proud Winnipegger and a member of the Bear Clan from the Couchiching First Nation. My spirit name is Ish Ka Dae Mukwa, which is Fire Bear in Ojibway. I would also like to introduce the Executive Director of the Commission, Dianna Scarth. We are sharing this presentation and she will be speaking to you in a few moments. The Bear Clan members, in Aboriginal tradition, are the care givers and peacekeepers. Many of our Aboriginal police officers are members of the Bear Clan. I mention this because historically in Aboriginal societies the emphasis was on keeping the peace rather on enforcing the law. Personally I prefer the first option.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission works to further equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination by protecting and promoting human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." In Manitoba, this ideal has been translated into law by *The Human Rights Code*, a provincial statute which prohibits discrimination on the basis of ancestry, nationality, religion, sex, age, disability, or other group stereotypes. Discrimination is prohibited in activities such as employment, housing and services, including the Winnipeg Police Service.

In addition to accepting, investigating and mediating complaints under *The Human Rights Code*, the Commission has a number of other responsibilities. It is responsible for educating the public about human rights, for promoting the principle that we are all free and equal in dignity and rights and for furthering the principle of equality of opportunity. The underlying principle of our legislation is the recognition of the individual worth and dignity of every person.

We are here this evening to determine what standards, skills and characteristics should be considered in the selection of a Chief of Police for our city. To assist in this determination, we would like to speak to you about recent community consultations, which the Commission has taken part in, and what we have heard. These discussions, with people from various communities, are part of a study conducted by the University of Winnipeg. The project is called The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project or the RCAPS project. We use the term "racialized communities" instead of terms such as visible minorities or persons of colour.

This project is looking into an alleged bias in police services to residents in Winnipeg neighbourhoods. There has been considerable debate about the relationship between race, racialized communities and police services. The focus has been on whether "racial profiling" exists, and if so, who engages in it, who it targets and whether it is a legitimate practice and if not, what can be done to prevent it.

Before we tell you what we have heard over the past year, I would like to briefly explain how this project came about.

In the summer of 2005, I was approached by members of the Centennial Neighbourhood Safety Committee, which raised concerns about police services in their Winnipeg neighbourhood. Some believe that they are being treated differently and do not feel safe in their own community. Their concerns ranged from - the treatment of residents who had contact with police in the course of an investigation and the lack of crime prevention in their area – to the manner of police response from the residents. The Commission was asked to look into the issue of racial profiling by members of the Winnipeg Police Service. We held community meetings in the Centennial, West Broadway and North End neighbourhoods.

The Commission had to consider how best to assess the accuracy of the concerns expressed and how to collect information. We met with some faculty members of the University of Winnipeg, who expressed an interest in carrying out a research project. For all of us, integrity is at the forefront of this project. There is also a recognition that although this could be a contentious and possibly flammable public issue, research could be the beginning of a new dialogue and understanding between the parties.

This project will contain information gathered from various sources including all available reports and public accounts.

### **Dianna Scarth**

To date, the Commission and the University of Winnipeg have organized four community meetings. We invited community leaders, police and the public to share their experiences. We have listened and we have learned. It is our hope that the Racialized Communities and Police Services study will benefit all concerned. We may finally be able to move from a history of apprehension and lack of trust, to finding a solution, which respects the needs of both the police service and the community.

I would like to share some of their thoughts we heard from members of racialized communities about the Winnipeg Police Service. One woman spoke of a refugee student accused of stealing by the police for buying a bicycle on the street. According to this story, the young man didn't realize that the bike might be stolen, as in his country of birth, buying off the street was typical and not illegal. Another story was about the fear an older aboriginal woman experienced by just being in the same elevator as two police officers.

These people are not just telling stories about confrontations or concerns with the police. They are also looking for reasons and solutions. We've been told that the perception of racial profiling by police is very strong in the Aboriginal communities. An educator said that her school is working on systemic issues of racism, and that even teachers need to look at their own biases. Others say communication on both parts is needed and the key is community officers or foot patrols who have the opportunity to understand the community and can be pro-active, not reactive. Many point to a disconnect between the people of racialized communities and the Winnipeg Police Service. Some say that racial profiling is likely to continue and possibly escalate because of misunderstanding cultures and stereotyping people. We heard from the previous police chief that he was disappointed at the amount of distrust that still exists. He said

that trust was a two way street and that the community often doesn't understand the role of police, and he admitted that the police do not always understand the community.

At these community meetings, those who were concerned enough to speak out have sent a message. Racialized communities want change. They want to find new and effective ways to build up a level of trust between themselves and the Police Service.

It is important that the successful candidate respect diversity and have the experience, skills, commitment and a proven track record in promoting the equitable provision of police services to all communities. This equitable provision of policing services should extend to the treatment of persons who have contact with the police, the provision of crime prevention services and the responses to calls for service.

The successful candidate should have a demonstrated commitment to bias-free policing practices, and be prepared to make the issue a priority by including the incorporation of standards throughout the chain of command and the force. The successful candidate should also address other aspects of equitable provision of police services to all members of the community, not only racialized communities, but also the disabled community and the lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered community and to those new immigrants whose history, religion or language may be a barrier to communicating with the police.

It is helpful to look at other Canadian experiences. In Ontario last March, on International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a new partnership between the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Toronto City Police was announced after the Commission had completed a project which solicited the views and experiences of racialized communities, as we are doing. Toronto City Police Chief Bill Blair said, "If we lose our trust, we lose our moral authority and legal authority to police the city." He also said "that there is nothing more corrosive to our relationship with diverse communities than the perception the police are acting with a bias." On a broader scale, we understand that the national Association of Chiefs of Police has also passed a resolution supporting the importance of bias-free policing. It is an important and timely issue, nationally and locally.

The Racialized Communities and Police Services Project is not over. The research is continuing, as is the Commission's involvement. I would like to stress the value of incorporating the perspectives of members of the police service in this study. We are hopeful that the new police chief will see the merits of walking through the door we have opened and agree to police service becoming directly involved in the project.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission has received a strong message from people in racialized communities. Many remember the names of former community police officers and speak of them with both praise and fondness. In selecting the next Chief, you have an opportunity to listen to these messages, which include recognizing the uniqueness of communities, building trust and re-visiting the spirit of community policing. True leadership demands nothing less.