

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Truth and Reconciliation in Canada

The Canadian government is taking steps to meaningfully address its long history of colonization, neglect and forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples. These steps are due in large part to the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Commission was set up as part of the settlement of the class action lawsuit brought by survivors of Indigenous residential schools against the Government of Canada. It released its findings and 94 calls to action in 2015. Recently, the Law Society of BC published its statement as to why reconciliation matters as follows:

“Canada’s laws and policies were created based on notions of Indigenous inferiority and European superiority, and have facilitated discrimination against Indigenous peoples. These laws resulted in disparities and inequalities between Indigenous peoples and broader Canadian society. These inequalities have led to many Indigenous peoples having a deep distrust of Canada’s legal system. Reconciliation is about addressing these inequalities.”

Clark Wilson agrees and seeks to build cultural competency firm-wide so we are prepared to support reconciliation through business for all clients engaged in the Indigenous context.

Calls to Action for Canadian Lawyers

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognized that Canada’s legal system, including the legal profession, has actively and passively supported the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples. Several of the Commission’s calls to action relate to Canada’s justice system. Call to Action 27 deals with cultural competency training for lawyers. In particular:

“We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown Relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.”

The Law Society of British Columbia adopted a Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan in May 2018 that includes a plan to make cultural competency training mandatory for all BC lawyers, but has not yet announced the details of that training. Rather than wait, Clark Wilson has moved forward with its own reconciliation action plan and cultural competency training which was completed for all of its lawyers in April 2019.

The Clark Wilson LLP Reconciliation Commitment

Clark Wilson's goal is to contribute to meaningful reconciliation through business between Canada's Indigenous peoples, its business and governments. Our firm's leaders will develop the Reconciliation Action Plan in close consultation with Mike McDonald, Q.C., Partner in Clark Wilson's Indigenous Law Group, member of the BC Law Society's Truth and Reconciliation Working Group, and member of the Peguis Nation; and Saul Joseph, associate in the Indigenous Law Group, a member of the Canadian Bar Association's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force, and member of the Squamish First Nation.

We will execute the Plan in a spirit of profound respect for Canada's Indigenous peoples and their history, culture, traditions, laws and institutions. Our core values of caring, quality, teamwork and trust will guide us.