



**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
**June 24, 2021**

## **Advocate for Children and Youth supports and stands with First Nations in discovery of undocumented burial site at former Marieval Residential School**

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Lisa Broda and staff mourn the children found buried in an undocumented burial site at the former Marieval residential school. "We stand with Cowessess First Nation and all Indigenous people in this terribly difficult and emotional time, as the truth of our colonial past is further uncovered," stated Broda.

The May 2021 discovery of 215 children buried in a former Kamloops residential school reignited the cry for action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls to action, most of which have not been fulfilled. Many pleas from First Nations communities were for the fulfillment of TRC calls to action directed at addressing the dearth of information about the burial of the missing children who never came home from residential school. "These are children – how utterly heartbreaking it is to know that they were so dishonored and treated with such indignity in their deaths," said Broda.

June is National Indigenous History Month. This is a time to recognize, honour, and support the rich roots of Indigenous history and culture. And in the past days we have also witnessed the passing of a landmark piece of federal legislation aimed at harmonizing Canada's laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. "It would be remiss not to reflect on the timing of these discoveries and the undeniable reckoning in the evolution as a country that we must own up to," added Broda. "While I am pleased to see government supports for Indigenous communities who are trying to find their children, they must step up and work toward the fulfilment of all calls to action in support of inclusivity, equity, and meaningful changes toward reconciliation," stated Broda.

Broda further calls on Canadians to feel the depth of the injustice brought to bear by this and other such devastating discoveries of innocent children taken from their families. "We have a true opportunity for awareness and growth, which this country needs in order to move forward in a way that is consistent with the collective values we aspire to," she noted.

"Our hearts go out to families who are impacted by this disquieting new discovery, and the ones that will no doubt follow. We can only hope this time and these developments spark greater understanding of the reality and evils of residential school and its colonial mandate, provides more Indigenous families with answers, and contributes to their healing path," said Broda.

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