



**September 29, 2021**

### **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

On September 30, 2021, the SASW will mark the first official National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. In recognition of this day, the SASW office will be closed.

The SASW remains committed to advancing truth and reconciliation within our organization and profession. The SASW's TRC Working Group is meeting for the first time on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This group was initiated by SASW Council to shape the work of SASW in walking the path of reconciliation.

As a member organization of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), the SASW affirms the CASW's statement (below). We encourage members to use this day as a time of reflection and to participate in local and online events occurring to mark this day.

On September 30, 2021, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) will mark the first official National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada: a day of reflection and mourning – but also of learning, understanding, and the commitment to a better future. CASW was deeply encouraged to see Bill C-5 pass into federal law in June 2021, making September 30<sup>th</sup> an annual federal statutory holiday.

Though the creation of this new national Day is an important step, collective and individual journeys of truth and reconciliation are far from complete. "This new Day is an opportunity to not only look back at Canada's history of genocide and colonialism, and especially with regards to Residential Schools," said CASW President Joan Davis-Whelan, "but also to reflect on the ways these forces are still at play today – and the critical work of reconciliation that remains to be done."

In taking stock of statutory holidays that are universally recognized across the country, certain trends emerge: most of these other days of reflection or celebration speak to Canada's colonial history and roots in Christianity, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a critical opportunity to unite as a nation in creating new traditions of decolonization, allyship, and inclusion.

"As an organization, CASW is honouring this statutory holiday; giving staff the time and space to reflect and attend events in their communities," added Davis-Whelan. "We encourage all organizations to respect the spirit of this important day and do the same – and particularly urge all provincial and territorial governments who have yet to make this day a statutory holiday to do so immediately."

Internally, CASW re-affirms its own ongoing journey of reconciliation, following the important truth telling in our [Statement of Apology and Commitment to Reconciliation](#), which highlighted the ways the Association – as well as the profession of social work more broadly – was, and in many ways still is, responsible for harm and injustice toward Indigenous People and Communities, and begins to chart a path forward.

Further, CASW continues to hold the federal government to account, calling for action on reconciliation following the lead of Indigenous people, communities, and organizations – and for the immediate implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’ Calls to Justice, and to fully realizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“Canada cannot let this Day be simply symbolic,” said Davis-Whelan. “Use it to pause, to learn. Use it to be an ally. But most importantly, use it to inspire action.”

