



Winter 2022 British Columbia
JUSTICE SUMMIT

Report of Proceedings

*Justice sector resilience: the COVID-19 pandemic and
emergency events in B.C.*

February 4, 2022



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Executive Summary

The theme of the 14th BC Justice Summit was *Justice sector resilience: the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency events in B.C.* This was an internally focussed Summit to reflect on lessons learned while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent weather emergencies and discuss how the justice and public safety sector can build internal resiliency to better respond to emergencies in the future.

The one-day Summit focused on collaboration and innovation across the justice and public safety sector; response successes, challenges faced, unintended consequences of decisions made, and what decisions and policies should be kept going forward, regardless of emergency situations. Through a combination of panel presentations, breakout rooms, and open-floor plenary discussions, participants reflected on their own experiences throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and weather emergencies from their unique perspectives, and how their organizations were able to pivot as the situation demanded while continuing to provide necessary services to citizens.

This document outlines the Summit agenda and discussions of the day, key themes that emerged from those discussions, and recommendations formulated based on the experience, successes, and challenges of participants while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency events. The goal of these recommendations is to provide the justice and public safety sector with an opportunity to build resiliency within their organizations and to align priorities to create a sector-wide approach when faced with emergency events.

Introduction

Background to the Summit Process

The *Justice Reform and Transparency Act* (the Act) of 2013 requires that a British Columbia Justice Summit be convened by Ministerial invitation at least annually. Summits are intended to encourage innovation and facilitate collaboration across the justice and public safety sector, by providing a forum for frank discussion between sector leaders and participants about how the system is performing and how it may be improved. The Act also established a Justice and Public Safety Council, appointed by Ministerial order, to develop a vision for the sector across the province. In addition to generating ideas and support for specific innovations in the sector, Summits also represent a key source of input and recommendations into the Council's planning process.

The objective of the 14th Justice Summit was to review the successes and challenges the justice and public safety sector faced in responding to recent emergency events and form actionable recommendations that could be implemented to build the sector's resiliency when responding to future emergencies. The recommendations provided below are intended to summarize and reflect concepts and common themes expressed by participants within Justice Summit discussions.

The Justice Summit maintains the principles of non-partisanship, non-attribution, and respect for organizational and statutory independence. Therefore, participant contributions are not attributed to specific individuals or organizations.

Fourteenth Summit: An Inward-Looking Justice Summit

Given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent climate-related emergencies, the 2022 Justice Summit was scaled down in size and scope to

provide a forum for sector leaders to reflect on how the justice and public safety sector can build internal resiliency to better respond to emergency events.

Objectives and Theme

This Justice Summit provided government a forum to focus on and discuss lessons learned from navigating a novel and challenging two years. This Summit facilitated conversation and reflection on how the justice and public safety sector may build resiliency and improve its response to emergency situations moving forward, while recognizing that every day challenges resulting from emergency weather events and the pandemic remain ongoing.

The theme of this year's Justice Summit was *Justice Sector Resilience: the COVID-19 Pandemic and Emergency Events in B.C.* The intent of this Summit was to investigate and explore key lessons learned within the justice and public safety sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent emergency events that have taken place in British Columbia.

This theme explored two key subtopics that emerged out of the feedback from various branches throughout the Attorney General and Public Safety and Solicitor General ministries, and the Justice and Public Safety Council.

The two subtopics were:

1. *Collaboration: Leveraging Resources and Expertise*
2. *Access to Justice through Innovation*

The Summit, discussion topics therein, and this Report of Proceedings were developed in collaboration with the multi-disciplinary Steering Committee, Working Group, Coordination Team, and Justice and Public Safety Council.

This Report of Proceedings captures recurring and common themes throughout the Summit discussions and defines recommendations with the goal of providing the justice and public safety sector with an opportunity to identify priorities for their organizations that align with this report, and to orient future strategies and actions towards achievement of these goals, creating a sector-wide unified approach to building emergency response and resiliency.

Panel Presentations

Panel presentations provided case studies of successes and challenges that the justice and public safety sector experienced in navigating through these unprecedented times. The panel presentations involved sector staff and external partners who exemplified leadership, collaboration, and innovation in their work.

Summit Discussions

Following each panel presentation, Summit participants were placed into virtual breakout sessions, where Justice Summit Working Group members facilitated engaged discussion on participants' own experiences in the past two years.

The intent of these breakout discussions was to seek the perspective of Summit participants with respect to their experiences as justice and public safety sector leaders in responding to recent emergency events. Participants were solicited for their impressions regarding future strategies and practical approaches for improving justice and public safety sector resiliency moving forward. This included reviewing successes, challenges, thinking about what the sector should maintain moving forward, and what should be considered in preparing for future emergency events.

Following each of the breakout sessions, there was a report-back session where key takeaways from each group were shared to the broader Summit participants.

Following report-back sessions, participants engaged in further plenary discussions on themes that came from the breakout and report-back sessions. A summary presentation was shared, and a forum was provided for open discussions and reflections from Summit participants, including considerations for future Summit planning.

Session 1: Collaboration – Leveraging Resources and Expertise

Session 1 featured seven panelists from across the justice and public safety sector, both internal and external to government that worked together to enforce public health orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This panel identified how meaningful collaboration between sector partners was critical, as the responsibility and authority for various aspects of the public health orders spanned across multiple jurisdictions and required working together as a whole to enforce them.

Presentation

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way many people did their jobs. With emergency orders coming into effect, a new gap needed to be filled with respect how those orders would be enforced. Through collaboration across the sector and with key external partners, resources were redeployed to focus on coordinating compliance and enforcement amid increasing expectations, as well as to inform and influence future emergency orders. By leveraging resources and expertise through collaboration, the justice and public safety sector found new ways to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

Panel Members

Matt Brown, Director, Public Safety Initiatives, Policing and Security Branch (Panel Facilitator), PSSG

Amy Barker, Research and Policy Analyst, Public Safety Initiatives, Policing and Security Branch, PSSG

Rupi Gill, Provincial Director, Compliance and Enforcement Operations, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch

Oona Kerwin, Regional Director, Fraser Health Authority

Cary Skrine, Executive Director, Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, PSSG

Supt. Peter Tsui, Officer in Charge, Operational Readiness and Response, Gold Commander DEOC COVID-19 Pandemic Team

Cole Winegarden, A/Director, Policy and Legislation, Policing and Security Branch, PSSG

Session 2: Access to Justice Through Innovation

Session 2 featured three justice and public safety sector executives who led work in the early stages of the pandemic that shifted away from traditional in-person service delivery as was necessitated by distancing requirements and gathering restrictions. These innovations leveraged technology and alternative approaches to doing work in order to maintain, and in some cases enhance, access to justice.

Presentation

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent local emergencies has dramatically affected the lives of citizens across the province. These unprecedented times required the justice and public safety sector to quickly pivot to ensure that the people of B.C. had access to the services they need, even when the traditional methods of service delivery were unavailable. In many cases, this led to the adoption of digital or virtual services, but in others it included new, innovative ways of service delivery apart from technology. From both perspectives, we explored how the sector delivered access to justice through innovation, as well as analyzed unintended or unexpected consequences arising from these decisions, and whether these innovations require further consideration through additional lenses, such as gender and societal equity.

Panel Members

David Loukidelis, QC, Principal, David Loukidelis QC Law Corporation (Lead Facilitator)

Daniel Darche, Executive Director, Technology Modernization & Strategic Projects, Information Systems Branch, AG

Stephanie Melvin, Executive Director, Family Justice Services Division, Justice Services Branch, AG

Kevin Conn, Executive Director, Policy & Service Reform, Court Services Branch, AG

Discussions of Emergent Themes

The key themes summarized are a synthesis of commonly raised ideas occurring in multiple simultaneous discussions on the topic. Not all participants contributed to all discussions. No inference of consensus (or majority opinion) should be made by the reader on any individual point, as no specific mechanism was employed by facilitators to determine the breakdown of opinion. Similarly, participants' ideas are represented with the sole intent of providing an accurate account of the dialogue. No analysis was performed on the accuracy of any particular assertion of fact.

Collaboration

Summit participants identified that the nature of meetings and collaboration initiatives differed from before the pandemic. Meetings occurred more frequently, had a significant sense of purpose, and were utilized as a forum for information sharing, open dialogue and problem solving. This increased frequency and forum of collaboration also presented some initial challenges between partners, however, ultimately, decisions were made diligently with the right people in the room and under expedited conditions.

Collaboration Successes

- Shifts in traditional reporting structures allowed for increased information-sharing and for rapidly changing circumstances to be addressed
- Increased collaboration with external partners created new and strengthened existing relationships by creating a more open and accessible channel for communication
- Leveraging existing relationships and lessons learned from earlier emergency and pandemic responses led to increased agility and resiliency when responding to new pandemic waves and weather emergencies

Collaboration Challenges

- Understanding unique priorities, capabilities and perspectives of individual partner mandates required additional consideration and collaboration to find the best path forward
- Increased level and frequency of collaboration with both internal and external partners was overwhelming at times
- Rapid communication with front line workers was required to ensure policy and protocol changes were possible and enforceable

Collaboration: What we Want to do Moving Forward

- Increased frequency and transparency of collaboration and information-sharing leading to more interconnected, purposeful, and sustainable relationships between partners

Recommendation

- Develop a formal communications framework that is based on position titles within branches and ministries, including a list of stakeholder/partner tables and how often they meet, to increase the accessibility of collaboration. This framework would then become part of business continuity plans and reviewed annually to ensure information is up to date

Innovation – Policy, Procedures and Processes

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated changes to the way work had previously been done. Given the nature of the virus, upholding the status quo was completely untenable. This change led the justice and public safety sector to innovate in the spheres of policy, procedures, and processes.

Innovation Successes

- Prioritization of emergency responses led to quick and efficient decisions, trying new solutions and an increased willingness to accept failure, learn from it, and move forward

Innovation Challenges

- Switching to virtual service delivery, essentially overnight, when in-person services were not possible
- Amending existing policies and legislation to account for new virtual service deliveries, and ensuring compliance with all federal and provincial privacy legislation

Innovation: What we Want to do Moving Forward

- Maintain a culture of continuous improvement and innovation
- Maintain a unified approach to service delivery by leveraging innovation across the sector and using what has been learned to improve services in the future
- Maintain access to justice for all, ensuring that decisions made following emergency response do not negatively impact vulnerable communities by taking extra time and consideration to assess what barriers these changes may present to these communities

Recommendation

- Review the impact and, if applicable, the unintended consequences of policies, procedures and processes created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency events with the intent to increase awareness and use lessons learned to mitigate potential consequences and challenges in future emergency response

Technology – A Facilitator of Collaboration Innovation

The justice and public safety sector has worked to embrace and leverage the increased use of technology in recent decades. However, responding to the pandemic placed further reliance on technology as an essential aspect of work and service delivery. Technology was essential to facilitate the sector's response to the pandemic and weather emergencies.

Technology Successes

- Increased collaboration and information sharing was made possible using technology for virtual connection
- Virtual service delivery allowed for greater flexibility for service users through the ability to access services from any location, as opposed to just in-person

Technology Challenges

- Imbalance of access to and capabilities of digital applications and platforms
- Training, ability, and comfort level with using digital applications and platforms, from both the service delivery workers and service users

Technology: What we Want to do Moving Forward

- Continue to offer virtual service options to enhance accessibility and engagement, while still offering in-person services to those who prefer not to access services virtually
- Improve user experience in accessing justice for all, including ensuring that those who are unable to use technology are not left behind

Recommendation

- Develop a set of objective criteria within the sector's Digital Strategy to evaluate the impact of new solutions, technology-related or otherwise, offered by the justice and public safety sector
- As we move forward in living with COVID-19, consider the challenges that may be created with the use of hybrid service delivery models and develop a set of Best Practices to share with the sector that works to mitigate these challenges for citizens

Our People and Organizational Capacity

In reflecting on the collaboration and innovation of the sector throughout the past two years and reviewing the successes and challenges the sector went through, a recurring theme that participants raised was related to the people who helped the sector navigate through these unprecedented times. The resiliency of the justice and public safety sector was highly dependent on the people who worked tirelessly throughout the course of the pandemic and emergency events to ensure that British Columbians could continue to count on the justice and public safety sector in uncertain times.

Our People and Organizational Capacity Successes

- Remote work and flexible work arrangements improved employee job satisfaction, morale, and work-life balance while helping reduce the transmission of COVID-19 throughout the province
- Adoption of digital applications and platforms such as Microsoft Teams offered an opportunity for rapid communication and information sharing with partners and colleagues across the province on a level playing field, where all participants felt equally connected and present despite geographical distance

Our People and Organizational Capacity Challenges

- Maintaining team's cultures and connections, and impacts to integration of new members into the team as they were prior to the virtual environment
- Increased workload due to changing environments and service delivery resulting in longer hours, limited resources, and employee burnout is not sustainable

Our People and Organizational Capacity: What we Want to do Moving Forward

- Maintain a unified communication and engagement approach from senior leaders
- Ensure changes and decisions made during times of emergency response reflect, serve, and improve the experience of all workers within the justice and public safety sector
- Maintain and enhance the resiliency of the workers of the justice and public safety sector

Recommendation

- In alignment with corporate direction, develop a framework that details the responsibility of each level of leadership to disseminate information to staff that can be followed when the next emergency arises. Having a plan in place for providing consistent direction will reduce confusion and lead to a more efficient response

Business Continuity Planning – Leveraging the Work Already Done

- Reflecting on lessons learned through each instance of emergency response, collecting information from across the justice and public safety sector to build a cohesive vision for the future

Summary of Recommendations

Collaboration

- Develop a formal communications framework that is based on position titles within branches and ministries, including a list of stakeholder/partner tables and how often they meet, to increase the accessibility of collaboration. This framework would then become part of the Branch's business continuity plan and reviewed annually to ensure information is up to date

Innovation – Policy, Procedures and Processes

- Review the impact and, if applicable, the unintended consequences of policies, procedures and processes created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency events with the intent to increase awareness and use lessons learned to mitigate potential consequences and challenges in future emergency response

Technology – A Facilitator of Collaboration + Innovation

- Develop a set of objective criteria within the sector's Digital Strategy to evaluate the impact of new solutions, technology-related or otherwise, offered by the justice and public safety sector

- As we move forward in living with COVID-19, consider the challenges that may be created with the use of hybrid service delivery models and develop a set of Best Practices to share with the sector that works to mitigate these challenges for citizens

Our People and Organizational Capacity

- In alignment with corporate direction, develop a framework that details the responsibility of each level of leadership to disseminate information to staff that can be followed when the next emergency arises. Having a plan in place for providing consistent direction will reduce confusion and lead to a more efficient response

Summit Feedback

Comments on the 2022 Justice Summit Report of Proceedings and the Summit process are encouraged and may be emailed to the Justice and Public Safety Secretariat at justicereform@gov.bc.ca.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summit Agenda

14th British Columbia Justice Summit (Virtual)
Justice sector resilience: the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency events in B.C.
Microsoft Teams: Friday February 4, 2022 | 8:30am – 4:15pm PST

Opening

8:30am-8:45am (15min)

Welcome/Opening Remarks

Richard Fyfe Q.C., Deputy Attorney General, Chair of the Justice and Public Safety Council

Summit Introduction

David Loukidelis Q.C., Lead Facilitator

Session 1 – Collaboration: Leveraging Resources and Expertise

8:45am-9:30am (45min)

Panel

9:30am-10:15am (45min)

Breakout Room Discussion

10:15am-10:30am (15min)

Bio Break

10:30am-11:00am (30min)

Report Back Discussion

Session 2 – Access to Justice through Innovation

11:00am-11:45am (45min)

Panel

11:45am-12:30pm (45min)

Breakout Room Discussion

12:30pm-1:30pm (1 hour)

Lunch

1:30pm-2:00pm (30min)

Report Back Discussion

Session 3 – Recommendations & Reflections

2:00pm-2:45pm (45min)

Recommendations and Reflections

2:45pm-3:00pm (15min)

Bio Break

3:00pm-3:30pm (30min)

Summary Presentation

3:30pm-4:00pm (30min)

Open Discussion/Reflections

Closing

4:00pm-4:15pm (15min)

Closing Remarks

Richard Fyfe Q.C., Deputy Attorney General, Chair of the Justice and Public Safety Council

Appendix 2: Summit Participants

Note that due to personal scheduling, some of the individuals listed below may have only attended portions of the overall Justice Summit programme. The following list does not reflect the specific sessions each individual participated in.

Anderson, Lisa (Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Corrections Branch, Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Avison, Don, Q.C. (Executive Director and CEO, Law Society of British Columbia)

Bauman, Honourable Robert (Chief Justice of British Columbia, Court of Appeal)

Bond, Allison (Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Campbell, Tracy (Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer, Corporate Management Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Carmichael, Barbara (Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Legal Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Cooke, Angela (Associate Deputy Minister, Housing and Multiculturalism, Ministry of Attorney General)

Craven, Paul (A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

DeWitt-Van Oosten, Honourable Joyce (Madam Justice, Court of Appeal)

Dobmeier, Teresa (Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Eby, David, Q.C. (Attorney General of British Columbia and Minister responsible for Housing)

Farnworth, Mike (Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Fyfe, Richard Q.C. (Deputy Attorney General, Ministry of Attorney General)

Gillespie, Honourable Melissa, (Chief Judge, Provincial Court of British Columbia)

Gunnarson, Erin (Provincial Director, Strategic Operations Division, BC Corrections Branch, Public Safety & Solicitor General)

Hamilton, Lisa Q.C. (President, Law Society of British Columbia)

Hinkson, Honourable Christopher E.
(Chief Justice, Supreme Court of
British Columbia)

Holmes, Honourable Heather
(Associate Chief Justice, Supreme
Court of British Columbia)

Jennings, Clare (President, Canadian
Bar Association BC Branch)

Juk, Peter Q.C. (Assistant Deputy
Attorney General, BC Prosecution
Services, Ministry of Attorney General)

Lapointe, Lisa (Chief Coroner, BC
Coroners Service)

Leung, Karen (Legal Officer,
Provincial Court of British Columbia)

Lowe, Charmaine (Assistant Deputy
Minister and CIO, Information
Systems Branch, Ministry of Attorney
General)

Manton, Jenny (Assistant Deputy
Minister, Court Services Branch,
Attorney General)

Massey, Christine (Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Mental Health and
Addictions)

McBride, Heidi (Executive Director &
Senior Counsel for the Superior
Courts Judiciary)

McCloy, Robert (Deputy Chief of
Central Programs, Court Services
Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Rideout, Wayne (Assistant Deputy
Minister and Director of Police
Services, Policing and Security Branch,
Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Salter, Shannon (Chair, Civil
Resolution Tribunal, Ministry of
Attorney General)

Scott, Doug (Deputy Solicitor General,
Deputy Minister's Office, Public Safety
and Solicitor General)

Simmons, Kerry, Q.C.(Executive
Director, Canadian Bar Association BC
Branch)

Skrine, Cary (Executive Director,
Enforcement Division – Investigations
& JIGIT, Gaming Policy and
Enforcement Branch, Public Safety
and Solicitor General)

Smiley, Shirley (Legal Counsel, Court
of Appeal for British Columbia)

Walsh, Taryn (Assistant Deputy
Minister, Community Safety and
Crime Prevention, Public Safety and
Solicitor General)

Wishart, Honourable Susan
(Associate Chief Judge, Provincial
Court of British Columbia)

Appendix 3: Steering Committee

The Justice Summit agenda, presenters and participants list, and discussion questions were collaboratively developed by the multi-disciplinary Steering Committee, with assistance from the Justice Summit Working Group and Justice Summit Coordination Team.

The Justice Summit Steering Committee Members and Judicial Observers are as follows:

Munro, Charmaine (Chair) (Executive Director, Business Planning, Corporate Management Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Loukidelis, David, Q.C (Principal, David Loukidelis QC Law Corporation – Lead Facilitator)

Corrado, Paul (Executive Director and Chief Sheriff, Court Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Dudley, Alison (Executive Director, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism, Ministry of Attorney General)

Fieltsch, Raymond (Executive Director, Office of Homelessness Coordination, Ministry of Attorney General)

Halter, Dillon (Executive Director, Specialized Intervention and Youth Justice, Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Hazel, Jillian (Executive Director, Gaming Policy and Enforcement, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Hildebrandt, Colleen (Manager, Strategic Priorities and Planning, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Kremler, Zac (Senior Director, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)

Leung, Karen (Legal Officer, Provincial Court of British Columbia)

Lipp, Jamie (Executive Director, Policing and Security Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Mah, Chris (Executive Director, Service Design and Architecture, Information Systems Branch, Ministry of Attorney General)



McBride, Heidi (Executive Director & Senior Counsel for the Superior Courts Judiciary)

Sandhu, Paul (Director, Legal Operations, BC Prosecution Services, Ministry of Attorney General)

Smiley, Shirley (Legal Counsel, Court of Appeal for British Columbia)

Walker, Melia (Director, Portfolio Management, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

Appendix 4: Working Group and Coordination Team

Additional guidance, facilitation, report drafting, technical information and other support materials were provided by the multi-disciplinary Justice Summit Working Group. Justice Summit development and planning processes as well as all final content, logistics, facilitation, and reporting for the event are managed by the Coordination Team.

The Justice Summit Working Group and Coordination Teams are as follows:

Clough, Michelle (CDS Project Director, BC Prosecution Services, Ministry of Attorney General, Working Group)

Gunnarson, Jess (Executive Director, Policing and Security Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Working Group)

Haines, Kate (Director, Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, Working Group)

Hobday, Erin (Legal Counsel, Independent Investigations Office of BC, Working Group)

Wolfe, Sandra (Senior Director, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, Working Group)

Anderson, Erin (Director, Partnerships and Planning, Corporate Management Service Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, Coordination Team)

Hilton, Lindsey (Senior Planning Reporting Advisor, Corporate Management Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, Coordination Team)

Starodub, Samuel (Research Assistant, Corporate Management Service Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, Coordination Team)