



Engaging Community

South Island Indigenous Authority

Spring 2023

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Who is SIIA?

THE SOUTH ISLAND INDIGENOUS AUTHORITY SOCIETY (SIIA) IS A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING THE NATIONS OF SOUTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND, AND INDIGENOUS GUESTS ON THE TERRITORY WITH CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE PLANNING.

We are an Indigenous Governing Body, which is a legal designation recognized by the federal and provincial governments. We act as representatives for South Island Indigenous people in working, Nation to Nation, with both the federal and provincial governments on resuming full jurisdiction for our Child and Family services. We are doing research and talking to people in our community members to ensure the law and our services are based on our own culture and needs that is governed by our people, for our people.

SIIA is working to develop our own Indigenous Child and Family law and to design a way of delivering services that are grounded in the values, traditions, and cultures of the South Island. We are gathering stories from people in our communities, making sure the law and our services are based on our own culture and needs. This work will create a better path forward for this generation, and for future generations. The new law will allow our communities to develop a child and family services system that is governed by our people, for our people.

We are doing this work now empowered by the Bill C-92 Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families which allows our communities to control and govern our child and family services, and to create our own Indigenous law to replace the current law created by the government of British Columbia.



The Community Engagement Team



Tha Se Kiyahé MARGARET CHARLIE

Margaret is a member of the Songhees Nation, where she lives with her family. She is our Community Engagement for Lead for the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. She also organizes and facilitates our Aunties' groups and Service Providers' Meetings.

MARGARETCHARLIE@SIIA.CA



PÍTĒLÁNEWOT SHANA SYLVESTER

Shana is a member of STAUTW First Nation, where she lives with her family. Shana is the Community Engagement Lead for the following Nations: ƛ́aačiidʔaaʔtx, T'Sou-ke, Sc'ianew, WŚÍ,KEM, BOKÉĆEN, and WJOLĒLP.

SHANASYLVESTER@SIIA.CA



Chris Jim

Chris is from the WŚÁNEĆ Nation residing on Tsawout. Chris is one of SIIA's new Community Engagement Leads whose specific focus will be connecting with men from our communities to learn more about their role in raising healthy children.

CHRISJIM@SIIA.CA



?Ixc'amgilakw JENNA LANCASTER

Jenna is Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish. She is a member of 'Namgis First Nation and comes from Musgamakw and 'Namgis on her father's side and Skw̓wú7mesh, Songhees and Lyackson on her mother's side. She is SIIA's Urban Community Engagement Lead and will be connecting with our urban Indigenous community to ensure that the new Legislation takes into account the diverse perspectives, needs, and strengths of our relatives living away from home in urban settings.

JENNALANCASTER@SIIA.CA

*Our Community Engagement Team members also work as a team to support and attend activities, events, and discussions in other communities apart from those they are assigned to



Why are we Engaging Community?

As SIIA is an organization representing the First Nations on the South Island, the Nations and Communities residing on the South Island are the foundation of this work. This work would not be happening if it were not aligned with each Nations' push to reassert their inherent jurisdiction over their children and families.

As we engage with communities, we adopt a strength-based, community-led, culturally grounded approach. We believe our communities have the teachings needed to raise healthy, vibrant, and strong children as we had done so since time immemorial prior to colonization.

As a planning organization, our job is one of translation as we take these stories and teachings and draft them into formal legislation and a service delivery model, while being mindful of family and Nation differences and that some teachings cannot be written out or shared widely.

“
Our communities have the teachings needed to raise healthy, vibrant, and strong children
”



STORY IS SACRED



At SIIA, we believe every story, every conversation, every tea shared with an elder about this work, matters. We feel deeply honored to occupy a position as a witness in these conversations, and do not take our role in translating this knowledge into this new legislation lightly. Depending on the nature of the content (and whether it is appropriate to write down), it also might be held as an oral story that, like any written content, also goes towards shaping our legislative planning process.

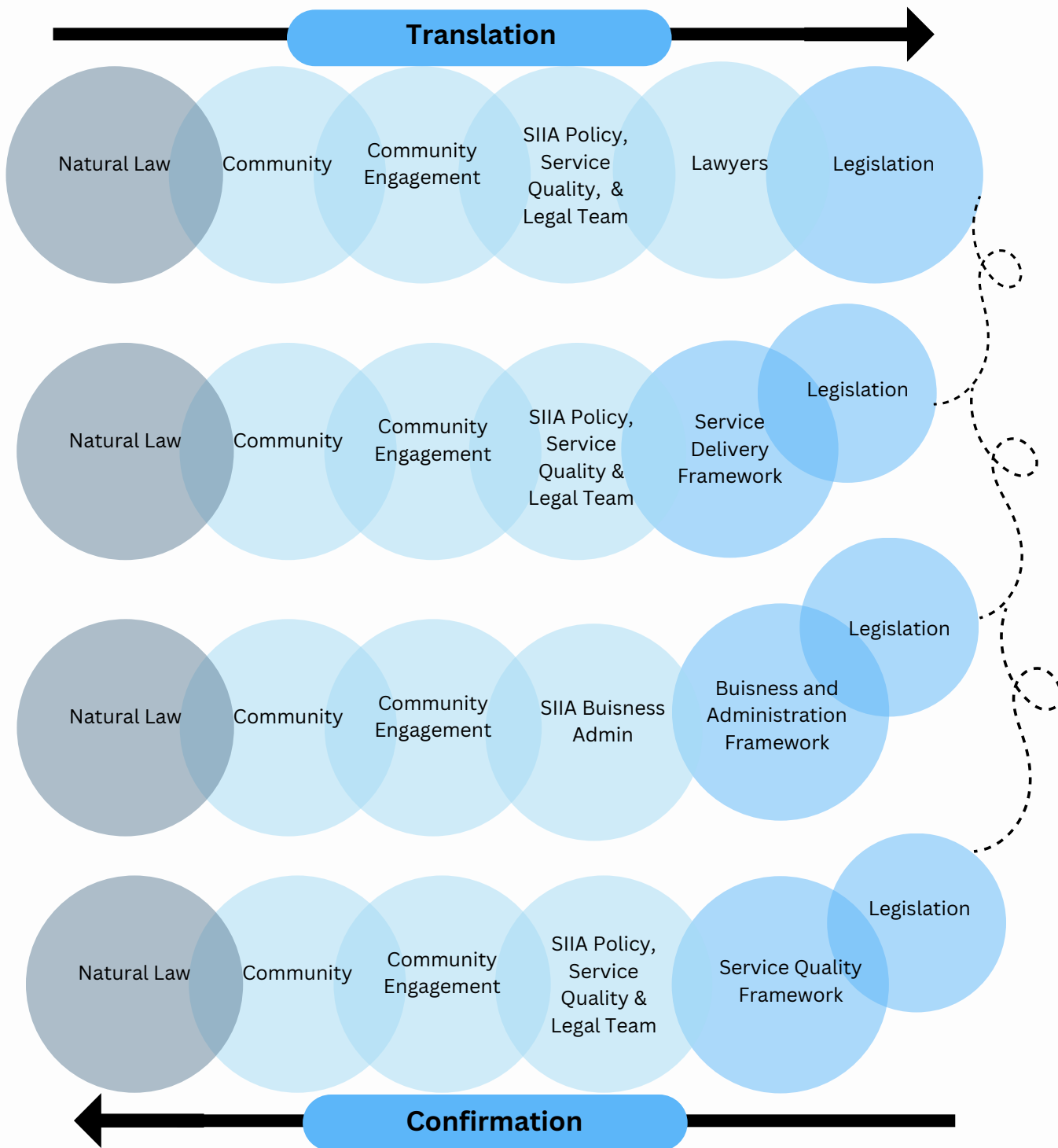
We also understand the historical extractive nature of story gathering that has impacted our communities since colonization—where our stories, songs, dances, etc. were taken, appropriated, sold, and taken away from the families to which they belong. With this in mind, we know we must walk gently in this work.



We are grateful that our team is made up of a number of local community members who grew up learning about what can be shared, and what cannot. We also have connections within community who continue to guide us in this work as we translate what needs to be incorporated into our future law.



Story Gathering and Translation



Story Gathering and Translation

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Our Community Engagement team are our frontline story gatherers as they connect with community. Their task is to be two-way translators on the ground, as they both

01

Share community members stories with those on our team responsible for drafting the framework and structure of this new legislation

02

Share with community members what is happening with SIIA's work

SIIA POLICY, SERVICE QUALITY, AND LEGAL TEAM

In most cases, our policy, legal, and service quality teams are the second line of translation as they incorporate communities' stories into a legal, service quality, and policy frameworks. Many of the questions that our Community Engagement team ask come from the needs of these teams. These teams understand and are similarly guided by teachings about what can versus cannot be shared publicly. Similar to our Community Engagement Team, they are also two-way translators as they both

01

Share back with our Engagement Team how stories are being incorporated into policy and the legislation to validate with community

02

Share necessary content with our lawyers for their professional support in drafting our formalized law.



Story Gathering and Translation

CONTINUED

SIIA BUSINESS ADMIN TEAM

Our business and admin team is the second line of translation (after our community engagement team) specifically focused on developing out a future business and administrative structure that will support and enhance our future legislation.

Our hope is to have communities' voices, teachings, ways of being, values, and laws incorporated into every aspect of this future system we are creating

No aspect of our team operates apart from connection to community as established through our story gathering and translation process.

LAWYERS

Our lawyers are contractors from the Woodward and Co. law firm who have years of experience working with First Nations. They provide the necessary legal expertise to draft this legislation in a way that can be upheld in the colonial courts. They too are responsible for translating the material being given to them from our policy and legal team into formal legislation.

The work of ensuring that community's voices are incorporated into every aspect of this legislation is paramount, as the Legislation drafted by our lawyers will ultimately need to be approved by each Nation.



For More Information

- We are continually trying to improve our communications with our communities and are always open to more suggestions.
- For more information and updates about SIIA's work please visit



www.sii.ca



South Island Indigenous Authority



South Island Indigenous Authority

- The general public can pose questions of SIIA through info@sii.ca.
- The Interim Executive Director can be reached at chuckeamer@sii.ca.

HUY CH Q'U/HÍSKWE/ĀEKO
FOR YOUR TIME AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO
CONTINUING ON IN THIS JOURNEY TOGETHER

