

#SLCCWhistler



WHISTLER BC

October 16, 2020

### Statement Regarding Incident of Hate Speech on our Premises

On October 11, 2020, an individual entered the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) and verbally attacked Cultural Ambassadors and Indigenous members of the SLCC team. The individual spoke hateful, racist comments in what we consider our home: a safe space where the cultures of the Squamish and Lil'wat People are discovered, practiced, and shared. This person acted in a way that they perceived as truthful, reflecting a deeper underlying issue about racism in Canada.

This is not the first instance of belligerence to occur at the SLCC, and although the people sharing hate speech in our building can be described, named, and remain traumatically etched in the memories of our frontline staff, we know this is part of a deeper problem in Canada. It is generations of teachings and miseducation behind the perpetrators that is causing such bold aggression.

In Canada, we boast multiculturalism as a national pride. The SLCC is choosing to share our experiences of targeted racism as a reminder that Canada is not immune to racial injustice.

*"To me, the Indigenous staff working here are so much more than the word 'staff'. They are Cultural Ambassadors possessing the endangered knowledge and language of their people. They are here for a sacred purpose: to reclaim and share the traditions and histories of their ancestors. Whether working in the Café, Giftshop, Museum, or at events, Cultural Ambassadors travel up to 4 hours a day to be at the SLCC. Our team choose to risk exposing themselves to further trauma from incidents such as these. They do this for the greater good of our mission: to share meaningful experiences, educating all, and lifting our distinct Skwxwú7mesh & Lil'wat7ul ways."* – Heather Paul, Executive Director



**Skwxwú7mesh Lilwat7ul**  
SQUAMISH LILWAT CULTURAL CENTRE

*“We welcome all people and all cultures. The Squamish and Lil’wat Nations have coexisted respectfully as neighbors since time immemorial. We are distinctively different, yet we have thrived on the bounty of the ocean, the rivers, and the land — living in close relationship with the world around us. Our cultures are grounded in rich, ancient traditions, and continue to grow and evolve in a modern world. It is this co-existence that we celebrate and this co-existence that we hope for from everyone arriving through our doors.” – Mixalhítsa7 Alison Pascal, Curator*

In the past, Indigenous people have been conditioned to say nothing about the oppressive and traumatic experiences happening towards them. For Indigenous people, each generation is meant to leave a better world for the next. By sharing this experience today, SLCC’s Cultural Ambassadors hope to start a conversation in your house, encouraging everyone to talk about what society, schools, and colonialism has taught them about our people. Unpack perceived truths and untruths by connecting with local cultural organizations that celebrate Indigeneity. Through our work, and the work of fellow cultural centres and knowledge seekers, we can all help shape the world for future generations to be more inclusive and respectful.

The SLCC is a safe place and a thriving cultural centre educating youth and visitors from around the world about the two Nations that share this territory. There is no room for hate or discrimination. We continue to welcome those who want to hear our stories, ask questions, and learn about our people – while exercising kindness, curiosity, and understanding.

### About Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)

Spo7ez Cultural Centre and Community Society is a registered Canadian charity and the first centre of its kind in Canada. The Squamish and Lil’wat Nations came together to celebrate and share our cultures with the world while creating meaningful employment opportunities for members of both nations. By sharing where we are from and where we are going, our visitors acquire a greater understanding of our Nations and the shared territories that Whistler resides upon. [www.slcc.ca](http://www.slcc.ca)

