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Report to the  
Clerk of the Privy Council on

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# Public Service Pride Week 2020

December 2020



I am pleased to submit to the Clerk of the Privy Council and Head of the Public Service this report highlighting the accomplishments of Public Service Pride Week (PSPW) 2020, which took place—virtually—across Canada from August 24 to 29, 2020.

As Champion of Public Service Pride, I had the honour of working with a dedicated group of public servants to put together the week's activities and, in doing so, send a clear message that the public service is committed to cultivating a diverse, safe, respectful, healthy and inclusive workplace.

PSPW has come a long way in just two years. This initiative started at the grassroots of the public service and is now seen as a key component of the Government's approach to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

This year's focus was on mental health and well-being. It is always a critically important subject, but it is even more so during these times of increased isolation.

Like many others who organized events in 2020, we had to adapt to the reality imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Going virtual did not stop us. It actually gave us even more of a reason to celebrate our diversity and honour the contributions of Canada's LGBTQ2+ communities to all aspects of Canadian society.

Colleagues across Canada and abroad had the opportunity to take part in important discussions that will continue to help shape the public service of tomorrow.

While there is always more that can be done and that will be done, we cannot forget how far we have come. This week was a great time to celebrate that progress!

I am so proud to be part of a public service that embraces diversity and inclusion. As Champion, I will continue to work with you to ensure that our workplace is safe, welcoming, respectful and healthy for everyone.

I would like to thank and congratulate all those involved in the planning and execution of PSPW 2020—it was a great example of interdepartmental collaboration. I was thrilled to see how many public servants volunteered to help; without them, the week would not have happened.

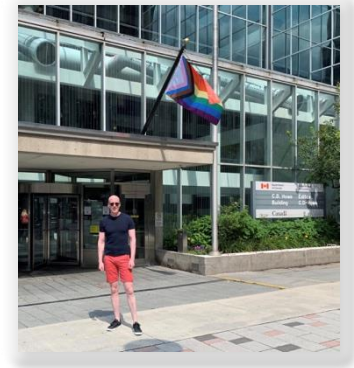
I am excited to see what PSPW 2021 has in store for us!

*Jason Bett*



# Introduction – What is PSPW?

Public Service Pride Week was designed to celebrate the resilience, spirit, contributions and diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, Transgender, queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2+) public servants from coast to coast to coast.



## Key highlights

- More than 50 federal departments and agencies took part in this year's celebrations, which is more than double the number of last year's participants.
- More than 1,500 public servants attended the various virtual panel discussions on mental health and well-being.
- To kick off the week, departments and agencies shared the first-ever PSPW message from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and the Champion for Public Service Pride to all public servants across Canada and abroad.
- There were statements and video greetings, including video messages from the:
  - [Prime Minister](#)
  - [Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth](#)
  - [Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance](#)
  - [Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada](#)
  - [President of the Treasury Board](#) and other federal representatives.
- Supportive messages and tweets were issued from the Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, deputy heads and other senior officials, including [Jody Thomas](#), [Deputy Minister of National Defence](#); Michael Keenan, Deputy Minister of Transport; Paul Glover, President of Shared Services Canada; and Chris Forbes, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; and Sarah Paquet, Executive Vice-President of Shared Services Canada.
- PSPW events generated many social media posts, likes and retweets. The number of followers on Twitter increased as the week went on: 354 for @2020PSPW and 1 12 for @SFFP2020.
- Pride flags were prominently flying on Government of Canada buildings across the country for the duration of PSPW.

## Making it happen

To ensure this year's success, the PSPW planning committee formed strategic partnerships with federal departments and agencies, the [LGBTQ2 Secretariat](#), departmental networks, Positive Space ambassadors, the Federal Youth Network and public servants at all levels across the public service, including the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, deputy heads and other senior officials.



## The PSPW Planning Committee:

- **JASON BETT**, PSPW Champion
- Director General, Operations – Strategic Communications and Marketing Sector, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- **ALEXANDRE DESJARDINS**, Senior Communications Advisor – Strategic Communications, Canadian Heritage
- **DOREEN FLYNN**, Coordinator – Strategic Communications and Marketing Sector, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- **ÉRIC LEVASSEUR**, Human Resources Advisor – Human Resources Branch, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- **CELINE NADREAU**, Manager – Strategic Communications and Marketing Sector, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- **MONICA POPESCU**, Senior Communications Advisor – Strategy and Innovation Policy Sector, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Several federal organizations hosted panel discussions and events as part of this year's program. Those include:

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
- The Federal Youth Network
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- National Defence
- Natural Resources Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Communications efforts were strategic, innovative and very successful.

ISED led in developing a common look and feel to help create a brand for identifying and linking all events across government.

Events were promoted using internal communications and social media. A [GCconnex group](#) dedicated to the week's celebrations also allowed employees across the country to share stories and photos from their events.





## Events summary (August 24 to 29, 2020)



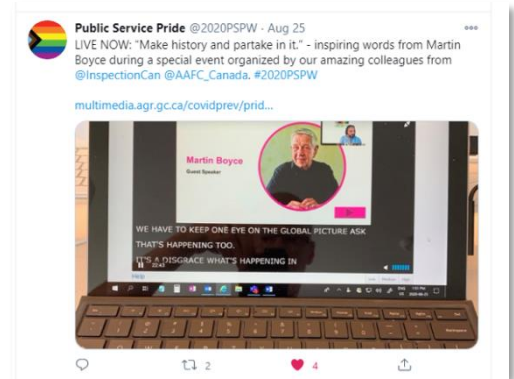
### 1. VIRTUAL FLAG RAISING

As a means to replace an in-person flag raising, departments and agencies throughout the public service posted an [animated Public Service Pride Week \(PSPW\) flag](#) on social media on Monday, August 24, at 9:30 a.m. to mark the beginning of PSPW 2020. Pride flags were all also flying prominently on federal buildings across Canada.

### 2. CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PRIDE: A CONVERSATION WITH MARTIN BOYCE

The Stonewall uprising played a significant role in the global LGBTQ2+ liberation movement. Inviting Martin Boyce to share his story about participating in the Stonewall uprising provided an opportunity for the Canadian federal public service to reflect on how past experience informs present reality. The act of sharing and remembering historical experiences is crucial in queer Canadian history.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency collaborated with the United States Embassy in Ottawa to organize and host this activity. This was a great opportunity to promote PSPW in another country as well as share ideas and hear about the work that other nations are doing to support LGBTQ2+ inclusion.



### 3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL PRIDE WEEK PANEL

The first Interdepartmental Pride Week Panel brought together representatives from several federal organizations to recognize the diversity that makes up the public service's LGBTQ2+ community.

The panelists discussed how their organizations are supporting LGBTQ2+ employees and shared success stories and best practices, all through a mental health and well-being lens.

The panelists were:

- **CHRISTINE MAO**, Manager of the Wellness and Inclusion Team at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- **BART BILMER**, Director of Planning and Reporting in the Canadian Forest Service at Natural Resources Canada
- **DOMINIC CLICHE**, Director of Environmental Management at Transport Canada
- **KIRK / KAIYA HAMILTON**, Manager of Strategic Human Resources and Business Intelligence at the Department of National Defence
- **LYDIA LIPIC**, Team Manager of the Contact Centre at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- **JEFFERSON MORRIS IV**, Policy Analyst in Diversity and Inclusion and LGBTQ2+ Departmental Representative at Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat



#### 4. PARENTING A TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE CHILD

Transport Canada employees Cathy Archer-Costello and Nancy Harris shared their personal stories on raising trans and gender diverse children. They discussed parenting challenges, including overcoming barriers and advocating for their child. The panel also provided critical insight to help parents and others understand the importance of being supportive of trans children, especially through their transition.

#### 5. PSPW DROP IN!

The Federal Youth Network organized two informal drop-in sessions for public servants, colleagues and allies to come together and learn about Pride and Positive Spaces through an interactive quiz. Participants learned about the history of LGBTQ2+ rights, key leaders, Canadian legislation and world history.

Sadly, during one of the sessions, the organizers had to deal with a trolling incident (known as “Zoom-bombing”) that included racist and homophobic content. Even though the session was rescheduled, the incident served as a reminder that there is still work to do to fight racism, homophobia and transphobia within and outside the public service.

#### 6. UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBLE WASHROOMS: TAKING PRIDE IN INCLUSIVITY

The panelists included Christopher Little-Gagné, Project and Program Administrator Leader from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs; two-spirit public speaker Dee Jenkins, Senior Policy Analyst from Indigenous Services Canada; and Missy Marston-Schmeltzer, LGBTQ2+ Champion from Canadian Heritage. The session discussed why universally accessible washrooms are so important for trans and gender nonconforming individuals, as well as the population at large, and how the departments occupying the Terrasses de la Chaudière complex are making exciting progress in bringing universal accessible washrooms to the workplace.

#### 7. LGBTQ2+ OTTAWA/GATINEAU COMMUNITY PRIDE DAY VIRTUAL EVENT

Federal public servants were invited to showcase their talent in a virtual community event that aired on the DiversityInTheCapital.TV YouTube page.





### What have we learned?

- Resources

Teamwork, hard work and dedication from volunteers were essential to making PSPW 2020 a success. However, dedicated financial and human resources will be critical to ensuring the sustainability of this initiative. Leadership is also a very important element of success, and it is recommended that the Clerk consider nominating a PSPW Champion every two years. The Champion would be responsible for PSPW events for two full fiscal years.

- Communications

Communications between federal institutions and social media presence were key. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to hold most of our events virtually. PSPW would benefit from increasing its web presence to facilitate information sharing.

- Going Virtual

Organizing large online events can pose particular technical challenges due, among other reasons, to the volume of participants. The Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) has committed to contributing to next year's PSPW. The CSPS has the capacity to host large webcast learning events with simultaneous translation. Once the dates are secured for next year's PSPW, the organizing committee will work with the CSPS to schedule events that can benefit from these resources.

### Already looking forward to PSPW 2021!

- Teaming up with the Canada School of Public Service
- Launching NEW Public Service Pride Awards to formally recognize an employee and/or a team of employees who embrace and promote diversity and inclusion by creating and fostering a diverse, safe, respectful, healthy and inclusive workplace
- Creating a network of Pride champions across all federal departments and agencies