

B.C. Business and Community Leaders Take a Stand Against Racism: We Say NO to Hate... It Must Stop Now

As business and community leaders, British Columbians, and human beings we cannot sit idly by. What we condone, we accept, and we cannot accept the growing racism and hate directed at people because of their ethnicity, culture, or faiths. Racism must be called out and it must stop now!

We are all deeply disturbed by the violent, overt and subtle displays of racism we are increasingly seeing and some that are being reported in the media. This is an affront to what it means to be a citizen in our province and country. As a place that welcomes the world, what we are witnessing is not who we are or aspire to be as Canadians. Admitting this growing problem will enable us to address it.

Brazen assaults on people of Chinese descent. Racist slurs directed at Indigenous peoples, visible minorities and people based on their faith. Hate messages written on buildings. The recipients of these reprehensible behaviours are our family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, fellow business and community leaders, philanthropists, and generations of people who have helped build our province.

These incidents and actions come in sharp contrast to the many generous acts of kindness and tolerance exhibited by so many British Columbians every day and particularly the compassion that we have seen during this trying time.

Our cultural mosaic is the envy of the world. It is comprised of generations who were born here and those who chose to come here to make a difference, to build a better life for their families and to contribute to a better province. It doesn't matter where British Columbians and their ancestors are from. As B.C. business and community leaders, we care deeply about our collective well-being and are standing up to say: **this is wrong**.

Here in British Columbia, we have been fortunate thanks to the leadership of both our government and the Provincial Health Officer, and the measures each of us have taken during COVID-19 to do our part to plank the curve. This is a collaborative success that exemplifies our capacity to care for one another.

Our primary job now is to dig out of this generational crisis together to create an even better province, with jobs and new opportunities for all. We need every British Columbian to be part of this rebuilding effort, working together with generous hearts, offering their solutions, intelligence, positivity, creativity and as Dr. Bonnie Henry so compassionately tells us: kindness.

Division makes us smaller and weaker, at a time when strength and collaboration is required given the pain that so many face. Study after study has shown that rich diversity in our workplaces and communities results in stronger performance and a higher quality of life, from improved productivity and innovation to global connectivity and economic prosperity.

Enough wrongs have been committed over the course of our province's history and this need not be another. Let's look back on this pivotal moment as a time when we turned our backs on racist tendencies and chose a different path that embodies our best character and shows our resilience and the humanity that has served us so well.

We ask you join us to stop racism, educate others and celebrate the diversity that gives us strength and an advantage in the changing world we face together.

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