



MEDIA RELEASE

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Civil Resolution Tribunal Implements Changes to Improve Accessibility for Gender Diverse People

Victoria, B.C. — The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) was the first tribunal or court in British Columbia to ensure participants were addressed by their correct pronouns and chosen names throughout the dispute resolution process. Optional questions asking about pronouns and chosen names have been included in CRT forms since 2017. However, over the past months, the CRT has implemented several updates consistent with our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Inclusivity and accessibility are core values at the CRT. An inclusive justice system requires organizations like the CRT to listen carefully to the lived experience and expertise of the people it serves. Even unintentional misgendering during a dispute resolution process could have a negative impact, causing unnecessary distress and harm. The CRT has worked to improve its processes to create a safe and respectful environment for transgender and non-binary persons.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the CRT frequently checks in with stakeholders, researches best practices, and rapidly implements changes. CRT Chair Shannon Salter and others met with members of the Canadian Bar Association BC (CBABC) Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Community (SOGIC) Section to ask for feedback.

“Our collective understanding of best practices for inclusivity continues to evolve, and the CBABC SOGIC Section members generously helped us ensure our forms, processes and language are up to date” says Shannon Salter. “We have now implemented almost all of their recommendations, with a few remaining action items that will be addressed in the coming months.”

Lisa M.G. Nevens, Co-Chair, SOGIC CBABC says “SOGIC is grateful for the CRT’s leadership in this area, its consultation with us, and its ongoing commitment to ensuring its practices are inclusive of trans, non-binary, and other gender diverse people. We are hopeful that these practice changes and the education that comes with them will improve the experiences of gender diverse people in the justice system and access to justice for our communities.”

For example, the tribunal uses gender inclusive language in CRT communications and tribunal decisions. Parties are given updated options to indicate their pronouns, title, and chosen names

which are used in CRT communications and tribunal decisions. Where a party's pronouns are unknown, gender neutral pronouns such as "them/they/their" are used.

Further, the CRT's Code of Conduct has always required participants to refrain from abusive behaviour towards other participants, CRT staff, tribunal members, witnesses, or other third parties. The CRT has amended the Code of Conduct to specifically state that abusive behaviour includes, deliberately refusing to use a person's indicated name, title, or pronouns, in written or verbal communications. Salter explains, "While abusive behaviour of this kind is extremely rare at the CRT, we want to ensure that all participants know that the tribunal is a safe place for them by clearly explaining and enforcing expectations."

One of the areas that requires further work involves legal names on court-enforceable orders. For a CRT order to be enforceable as a court order, it must include the parties' legal names. However, a transgender or non-binary person's legal name may be their former name, or "deadname". Using a person's "deadname" can be harmful and traumatic. At the same time, the legal requirements for court orders to be enforceable are outside the CRT's jurisdiction or authority to change. The CRT is committed to raising this issue within the justice sector to advocate for changes to the legal requirements around the enforcement of court orders.

About the CRT:

The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) is part of the justice system in B.C. It is an independent administrative tribunal that adjudicates small claims, vehicle accident claims, strata, societies and cooperative association disputes in the province.

Quick Facts:

- The CRT is Canada's first online tribunal.
- The CRT began accepting strata disputes on July 13, 2016, small claims disputes on June 1, 2017, motor vehicle injury disputes on April 1, 2019, and accident benefits disputes on May 1, 2021.
- As of August 31, 2021, the CRT has handled 23,876 disputes.

Learn More:

To learn more visit:

- About the CBABC SOGIC Section: <https://www.cbabc.org/Sections-and-Community/SOGIC>
- Read the CRT's blog post for more information about gender inclusive policies, staff training, and areas for further work. <https://civilresolutionbc.ca/the-crts-commitment-to-lgbtq-inclusion/>

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