



**2025 PSAC BC Regional
Conference for
Racialized Members**

Village: Rooted in Strength Rising Together

Oct 3-5, 2025 | Hilton Vancouver Metrotown Hotel, Burnaby



mandate after having already reduced federal government office spaces after the pandemic.

Sharon reminded delegates of the political power they hold as union activists and encouraged them to use it. Sharon clarified that the use of that collective power extends to mobilizing on human rights issues, both locally and abroad, referencing the current crises in Palestine, Sudan, the Congo and other parts of the world. The National President then highlighted ongoing actions that PSAC is taking to address issues closer to home such as the anti-Black racism class action lawsuit, anti-EDI actions by led by conservative parties across the country, and by the Bloc Quebecois in the province of Quebec. Sharon concluded her remarks with a message to delegates: "You are part of a profound movement. Carry this spirit forward in the work of the union."

To close the day, delegates heard from Keynote Speaker, Jasbir (Jas) Hundal who is a Registered Clinical Social Worker and Clinical Counsellor. Jas spoke to the members about mental health and resiliency in the face of racism and provided

members with a tool to gauge their wellness from a holistic perspective. Jas also provided delegates with strategies for wellness and educated members on the important role that organizations play in ensuring healthy workplaces.

Day Two of the conference was opened by Celine Ahodekon, who took time to recognize the National Day of Action on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender Diverse peoples.

The agenda for the day continued with a welcome and a panel discussion with three panelists: PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President for the Ontario Region Craig Reynolds, Registered Clinical Counsellor Jonathan Jeet, and community activist Jeany DaCena.

Craig Reynolds spoke to members about his experience navigating dominant culture and introduced the concept of "buoyancy" where racialized folks hold their own against individual and systemic racism. Craig noted that he prefers this term over "resilience" as the latter implies a return to normal, which is not always possible for racialized folk.

From October 3-5, 2025, forty-six (46) PSAC BC racialized members came together for the 2025 PSAC BC Regional Conference for Racialized Members.

The Conference Organizing Committee—consisting of PSAC BC Racialized Members Coordinator Celine Ahodekon (chair), Joyce Lawson (vice chair), Jonathan Jeet, Sherel Sandhu and Vladamir Avila—worked hard to plan the 2.5 day conference, including a social event on the Saturday as well as optional evening hospitality events.

The conference began on the Friday with Debra Sparrow, Knowledge Keeper from the Musqueam Nation, opening the event in a good way. Debra welcomed participants from throughout BC and spoke to members about the importance of recognizing that we are one village. Knowledge Keeper Sparrow also highlighted the need to listen to our

communities, alluding to the reality that Indigenous and racialized communities face the shared challenge of having their voices heard.

Delegates then received a brief welcome from PSAC BC Regional Executive Vice-President Jamey Mills. Jamey spoke to members about the importance of the conference and how rising together across cultural boundaries is how we can effectively combat racism as a union.

Delegates then received a welcome from PSAC National President Sharon DeSousa. Sharon talked with delegates about the importance of organizing, speaking up, and defending all those who keep the country running. Sharon noted that budget cuts were a lazy, reckless and dangerous way to approach federal budget. This is especially true if these budget provisions do nothing to address wasted tax dollars on things like failed Phoenix pay system, expensive consultants, and enforcing an arbitrary in-office

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Report on the 2025 PSAC BC Conference for Racialized Members





Jonathan Jeet spoke about values-based living and navigating cultural differences by finding ways to engage with folks in ways that continue to honour your own cultural values. This included engaging with colleagues through coffee/tea chats and sharing sweets. He also spoke about other means of connecting with colleagues that avoid defaulting to the traditional happy hour social format.

Jeany DaCena shared her own migration story of navigating precarious employment situations and finding ways to continue building her own life. Jeany also highlighted the need to recognize similarities between all.

Following the panel discussion, delegates participated in the workshop "Collecting Our Stories". Within this workshop, delegates talked about different types of racism (individual, structural, and systemic), and also discussed variations of racism (anti-Asian, anti-Arab, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, etc.). Group discussions took place on different types of racism in the workplace, issues of lateral violence, exclusionary hiring practices, having extra work assigned or having tasks taken away.

Through the group activities and the work of the facilitator, delegates also identified positive changes and advances they have seen in the

anti-racism movement as the result of activism on the part of racialized folks. The facilitator closed the workshop by reminding delegates that they could provide contact information to share their stories for the purpose of possible future PSAC actions on the many forms of racism.

The Saturday program included a catered lunch, which allowed delegates to engage with one another. Networking and community-building had been identified as priorities by the organizing committee. Consequently, this lunch provided delegates with the opportunity to meet other members in their geographic area within the Region and

a chance to get to know one another. The day ended with delegates breaking off into two groups that participated in two concurrent facilitations of the workshop "Contributions of Racialized Union Activists". The workshop began with an interactive activity that was designed to get participants moving and acquainted with one another. The workshop explored the experiences of racialized union activists, focusing on their challenges, struggles, successes and way forward. The workshop concluded with a mobilization exercise, which encouraged delegates to reflect on how they can get



involved at the local and community level to mobilize around the issues that matter the most to them.

Day three of the conference began with a powerful opening address from Craig Reynolds, REVP for the Ontario Region. Craig delivered an impassioned speech that touched on his own personal experiences with racism and the broader impacts of racism on the racialized community. REVP Reynolds also acknowledged that folks experience racism differently, which means that speaking about racism can impact everyone differently. Craig's speech highlighted the complex reality of racism where even at individual incidents, it is both contextual and related to broader systemic issues.

Delegates were provided with a brief educational session on resolutions before they had the opportunity to participate in the scheduled resolutions debate. Staff worked hard to ensure delegates received an experience that paralleled the resolutions debates at PSAC national conferences and conventions.

Celine chaired the resolutions debate with assistance from Craig Reynolds as her parliamentarian and technical advisor. The Resolutions Committee consisted of Colin Cheng (chair), Priscilla Lam, and Shong Chow, with Yameena Zaidi as staff support. Within the time allotted to resolutions debate, delegates voted two accept the Committee's recommendation of concurrence for two of the three resolutions. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to debate or vote on the third resolution.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Musqueam Knowledge Keeper Debra Sparrow was unavailable to rejoin delegates on the Sunday to close the conference. Despite this, the conference closed with gratitude and with well wishes for Debra. The group also acknowledged the hard work accomplished during the conference, and delegates were reminded of opportunities to continue their activism through PSAC Regional Human Rights Committees and were provided with other avenues for engagement.



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