



British Columbia's  
Office of the Human Rights  
Commissioner

**From hate to hope:  
Report of the Inquiry  
into hate in the  
COVID-19 pandemic**



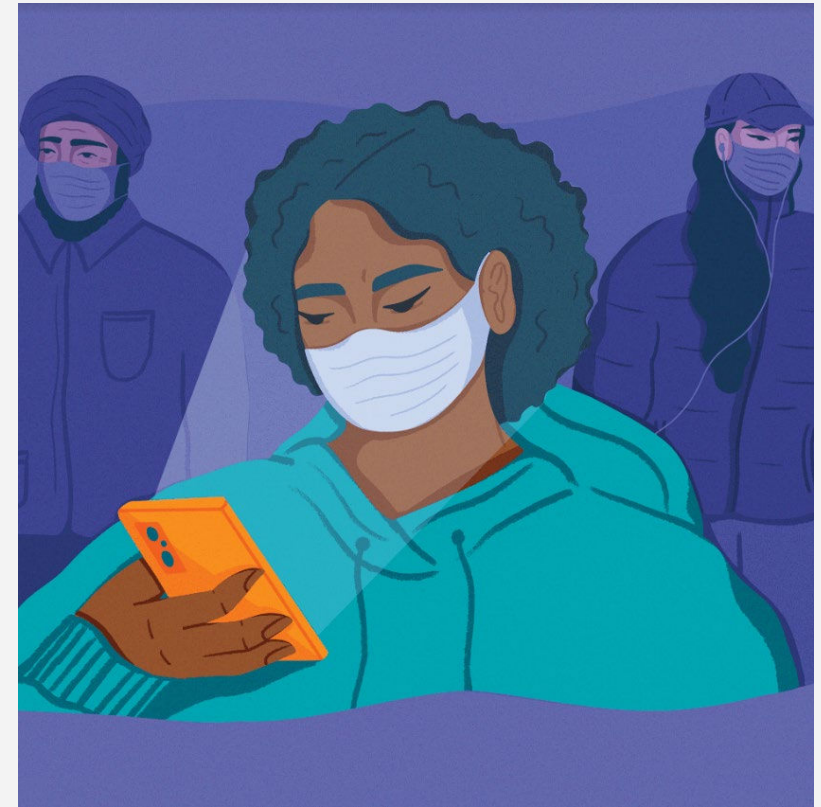
# Terms of reference

- What has caused the apparent rise of hate incidents in B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What kinds of hate have individuals and communities in B.C. experienced during the pandemic and how have these experiences affected them?
- How can we address, eliminate or prevent hate incidents during times of crisis and beyond?
  - How effectively have public and private institutions responded to hate during the pandemic?
  - How effective is our public policy and law in addressing hate?

# Defining hate incidents

Actions and speech rooted in prejudice that, in the view of the person who experiences or witnesses them, are:

- Aimed at a person or a group of people because of their personal characteristics, and
- Intended to, or do, significantly harm that person or group.



# How we did this work

- **46 virtual hearings** where we heard from **100** people, including **52** organizations
- **800 people polled** in a public opinion poll of a representative sample of people living in B.C.
- A public survey where we heard from more than **2,600 respondents**
- Information requests to **46 public bodies**
- **20** written submissions

# How we did this work

- Two sets of information requests to all municipal police departments in B.C. and the B.C. RCMP
- Orders and information requests to **seven social media companies**
- **Five external research reports** on topics relevant to the Inquiry
- Cross-jurisdictional **research**
- An in-person **Elders gathering**



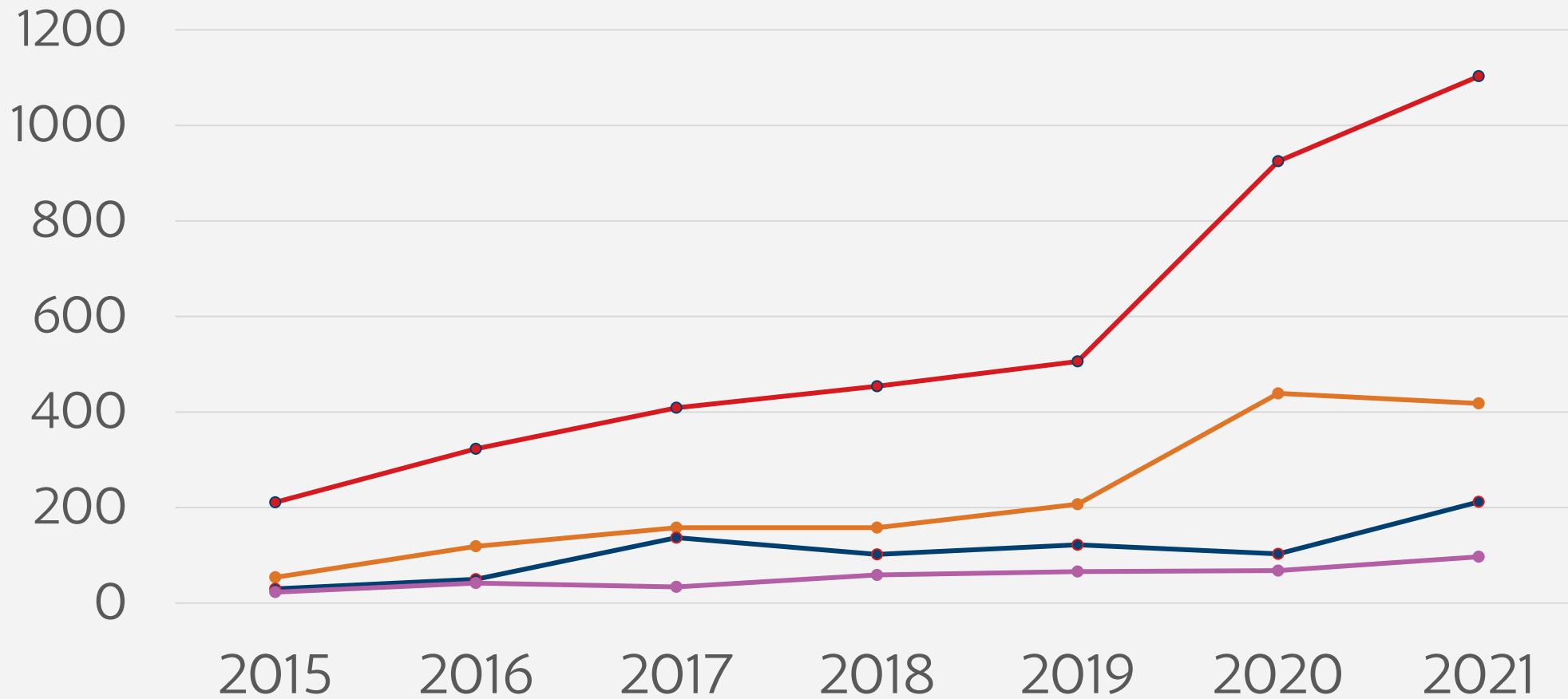


# Findings:

## What we have learned about hate



# Number of police-reported hate incidents in B.C. from 2015-2021

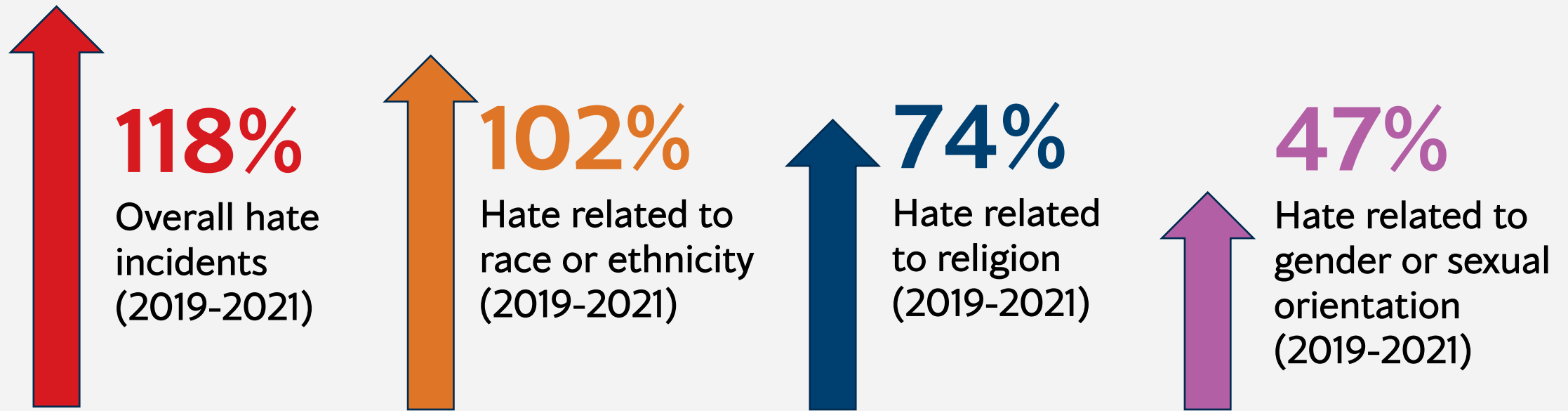


● Overall ● Race or ethnicity ● Religion ● Gender or sexual orientation



## Key finding:

Hate incidents have increased dramatically during the pandemic.



## Key findings (continued)

- Hate is disproportionately experienced by **marginalized communities**
- **Gender-based violence** has increased dramatically during the pandemic
- **Online hate** increased dramatically during the pandemic
- Hate is not new, **hate has deep roots in B.C.**, is rooted in power and control, and reflects broader long-standing patterns of discrimination and oppression

## Key findings (continued)

- A lack of data on hate incidents that occur in different sectors and settings across the province impedes action
- Legal responses to hate have been largely ineffective
- Government responses to hate have been largely ineffective
- Community responses to hate can be effective with adequate funding and centralized coordination

An illustration set against a teal background. In the foreground, two women are shown in profile, facing left. The woman on the left has long, dark hair in a thick braid, wears a purple top, and large green and white earrings. The woman on the right has short dark hair, wears an orange top, and a blue hoop earring. Her right hand is placed on the left woman's shoulder. In the background, several other people are depicted in a lighter, semi-transparent style, suggesting a crowd. The overall mood is one of solidarity and support.

*After reviewing the mountain of evidence presented in this report, it is impossible to deny that we are at a reckoning. In our polarized society, we must be decisive in our compassion and creative in devising non-violent responses to hate.*

# Recommendations:

## Whole of government response



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- The Government of British Columbia should:
  - Create a role at the **assistant deputy minister level or higher** to coordinate and lead prevention and responses to hate
  - Produce a **whole of government strategy and action plan** to address hate



# Recommendations:

## Understanding hate and acknowledging harm



All of us have an obligation to understand and confront hate, to educate ourselves about it, to treat each other with respect and dignity and to create a sense of belonging and acceptance.



# Recommendations:

## Understanding hate and acknowledging harm

- Expand anti-hate curriculum throughout the K-12 system
- Community led province-wide **centralized reporting system** for hate incidents
- **Mandatory training for police** on hate crimes response



# Recommendations:

**Building safety  
and belonging**



# Recommendations:

## Building safety and belonging

- Support and fund community development of restorative and healing programs to deal with hate
- Incorporate the principles of a human rights-based approach into existing emergency response procedures



# Recommendations:

## Building safety and belonging

- Social media platforms should:
  - **Enforce rigorous terms of service** to address hateful content
  - **Reform algorithms** to favour less divisive, discriminatory and misleading content in order to drive viewers away from potentially hateful information
  - **Immediately stop placing advertisements** alongside hateful content



# Recommendations:

## Building safety and belonging

- Social media platforms should (continued):
  - **Allow independent audits** in order to assess ongoing risks of hate amplification created by platform design, and develop risk mitigation strategies of ongoing risks.
  - Commit to timely, transparent and accurate **public reporting**

# Recommendations:

## Fostering accountability and repair



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## Fostering accountability and repair

- Reform Crown policy directives to emphasize the strong public interest in prosecuting hate crimes
- Institute a **policing standard** on responding to police-reported hate incidents
- Take steps to **enable the BC Human Rights Tribunal** to be more responsive to hate

