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STATEMENT FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR OF HOCKEY CANADA

Hello, my name is Andrea Skinner. As you may know, I have recently been appointed by the Board of Directors as Interim Chair of the Board, with the support of Hockey Canada's regional, provincial and territorial Members.

Hockey has been of fundamental importance to me throughout my life. I played minor hockey right through to University hockey, captaining the Cornell Women's hockey team my senior year where I also achieved academic honours. I have officiated at the highest levels of women's hockey, and I was an assistant coach for the University of Ottawa varsity hockey team while obtaining my law degree. Meaningful community involvement has always been a high priority for me. I was encouraged to seek election to the Hockey Canada Board of Directors in November 2020 as a way of giving back to the sport that has been so important to me and my family.

I am aware that Hockey Canada's leadership, including its senior staff and our volunteer Board of Directors, have lately come under intense scrutiny and that many have unanswered questions. I hope to address some of those questions in this letter and going forward over the next several weeks.

There has been much talk about a toxic culture in our sport and a culture of silence. When we use these phrases we are talking about behaviours that are contrary to values of safety, fair play, team work, respect, and authenticity. Toxic behaviours can include bullying, name-calling, disrespectful or demeaning language, using or threatening violence, harassment, gender-based maltreatment, sexism, racism and sexual abuse or assault. While tens of thousands of players and parents across our country have never experienced such unacceptable behaviour in hockey, any instance of this behaviour - in hockey or elsewhere - is an instance too many.

I believe we must name and address the specific behaviours we want to see eradicated from our game and from our society. We must better educate and train our players, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers. They should be empowered and encouraged to speak up and call out bad behaviour when it takes place. This requires a collective effort - a team effort - from all of us involved in the sport.

Our Board of Directors: Who We Are

I want to tell you briefly about our current Board of Directors. Our Board was elected in November 2020. It was the first Board elected under updated by-laws which were amended in 2019 to require the involvement of an independent nominating committee in the Board elections, and to require a minimum of two men and two women to be elected to the Board. Following the November 2020 election, three women and six men were elected to the Board. Three of us on the Board have young children - parents of minor hockey players or future minor hockey players. Subsequently, one of the women elected to our Board was appointed to sit as a judge on the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Her place on the Board was filled by one of our current Board members who was elected by our Members across the country. He has, in my view, been a great addition to the Board. Recently, our former Board Chair resigned. He was a

francophone, a lawyer, and an individual who I respect; someone who paused his law practice in order to volunteer full-time for Hockey Canada.

Our Board brings a broad range of personal and professional experience, both inside and outside of hockey. We have representation from different ethnic and cultural communities, including from the indigenous community, and from the LGBTQ2Q+ community.

A number of our Board members, including me, have full time jobs. Each of us have devoted hundreds of hours away from family and from our jobs to work as a volunteer Director. Over the coming weeks, we will further respond to some of the misinformation directed at or related to the Board and its work.

As recently as earlier this week, I read media reports about alleged “perks” that past Board members may have received while serving on the Board of Directors. I cannot speak to what happened in the past. Our current Board is governed by a Directors Code of Conduct which was most recently revised in March 2020. This document sets out the duties and responsibilities of Directors, provides direction with respect to identifying and avoiding conflict of interest, and stipulates rules with respect to gifting and hospitality, which include:

“Directors shall not directly or indirectly offer or accept cash payments, gifts, gratuities, privileges or personal rewards, which are either intended, or would objectively be perceived as being intended, to create an indebtedness for the purpose of influencing the activities or affairs of Hockey Canada... .”

I am not aware of any current Board member who has violated our Directors Code of Conduct.

What We Have Accomplished

Since I have been on the Board, we have brought forward new ideas and perspectives, with a particular focus on making the game more inclusive and accessible to all Canadians. These are concepts that our provincial, regional and territorial Members have embraced. It is clearly reflected in our new Strategic Plan which will guide us over the next four years.

The Board has several Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, and Task Teams. Our Committees and Task Teams are comprised of both staff representatives and a cross-section of dedicated volunteers, all of whom are committed to making hockey better.

Since our election in late 2020, our Board and the organization have made considerable advancements. For example:

- In June 2021, the provincial, regional and territorial Members and our Board approved a new playing rule, Rule 11.4, with a view to calling out particular attention to - and tracking - incidents of discriminatory taunts, insults or intimidation both on and off the ice. Through game incident reports and other reporting mechanisms, we are collecting data on the prevalence of maltreatment inside and outside the game which we will then be able to use to take further, active steps to eliminate unacceptable behaviours from our sport as much as we possibly can.
- In June 2022, following extensive work and input by a specialized Task Team comprised of subject matter experts and Board liaison, Kirk Lamb, the Board adopted a fully inclusive gender expression and gender identity policy, in support of Hockey Canada’s commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for all of our registered participants, including transgender participants.
- Earlier this year, as a result of the work of our Risk Management Standing Committee, chaired by Board Member Mary Anne Veroba and with the integral assistance of Hockey Canada staff, Hockey Canada created a national template maltreatment policy, modeled after and consistent with the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and

Address Maltreatment in Sport, that was shared with each of our provincial, regional and territorial Members.

- As a result of the tireless work of the volunteer members of our Female Hockey Policy Committee and our Women's Hockey Canadian Development Model Working Group, led by Board liaison Barry Reynard, our girls and women's hockey program has made incredible strides over the past few years. Many of the recommendations from these groups are incorporated into our new Strategic Plan.
- In the spring of 2021, these two female hockey groups led a two day national forum on the state of women's hockey and women's leadership in hockey in Canada, which was a resounding success. It was a testament to the growth of women's hockey and the leadership of women within the game, and also an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas for how we can continue to support and grow the women's game. As a Board, we are committed to capitalizing on this momentum.
- Our Coaching Task Team, which includes dedicated volunteers from across the country, developed and added new content within the Hockey Canada Coaching certification process with regards to ensuring a safe environment for players, with topics like maltreatment, social media, transformational coaching, and security management.
- Our Officiating Task Team, comprised of staff and subject matter expert volunteers across the country, developed a new standardized national curriculum for the education of officials, with a view to achieving consistency and excellence in officiating from coast to coast.
- Under the oversight of the Human Resources Standing Committee, Hockey Canada has undertaken a third party "Human Resources Health Check" which involved a review of all operational and management policies, practices, processes and approaches to ensure legal compliance and alignment with industry best practices.
- Hockey Canada engaged a third party to undertake a Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap exercise with a view to identifying and achieving short and long-term diversity, equity and inclusion objectives.

Our Commitment

Despite these tangible and constructive advances to our game, we have identified areas where the organization can be and needs to be better. We are committed more than ever to foster and maintain a safe and positive environment where people can experience the enormous benefits of participating in our national sport, whether as a player, coach, official, parent, volunteer or fan.

While the Board is up for re-election later this year, we are steadfast in our commitment to continue to take steps to improve our game. The governance review and the implementation of our Action Plan will assist us with continuing to make positive changes for the organization and for the game of hockey.