

Spousal Real Property Law

September, 2017

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Table of Contents

PRFA	MBLE	2
1.	TITLE	3
2.	INTERPRETATION	3
3.	APPLICATION OF LAW	4
4.	DOMESTIC AGREEMENTS	6
5.	FAMILY HOME	7
6.	ACCESS TO COURT	8
7.	AMENDMENTS	13
8.	REGULATIONS	13
9.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	14

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS

A. Cheam has Syuwá: lelh – traditional laws and teachings – including:

Éy kws hákw'elestset te s'í:wes te siyólexwálh

It is good to remember the teachings of our ancestors.

S'ólh téméxw te íkw'élò xólhmet te mekw' stám ít kwelát

This is our land, we have to take care of everything that belongs to us.

Xaxastexw te mekw'stam

Respect all things.

Éwe chexw gelgelit te mekw'stam lóy kw'es li hokwex yexw lamexw kwú:t

Don't waste, ruin, destroy everything; only take what you need.

- B. Cheam has an inherent right to self-government which emanates from our people, culture, and land which is recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- C. Cheam is committed to carrying out our responsibility to protect and manage the land and resources for future generations in accordance with Stó:lō heritage, culture, and traditions, while allowing for the evolution of modern expressions of that heritage, culture, and tradition.
- D. Cheam, as an aspect of our inherent right of self-government, has the jurisdiction to address real property issues on its reserve lands, including the distribution of spousal real property upon the breakdown of marriage and common-law relationships, and this inherent right has not been extinguished.

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- E. Cheam wishes to manage our land and resources on our Reserves by ratifying a Land Code, which came into effect September 1, 2016.
- F. Pursuant to the *Framework Agreement*, Cheam agreed to enact rules and procedures, applicable on the breakdown of a Spousal relationship, to the use, occupancy, and possession of Cheam Reserve Lands, and the division of interests in that land.
- G. Cheam intends to honour its undertaking to provide rights and remedies, without discrimination on the basis of sex or gender, with respect to spouses who have or claim interests in Cheam Reserve Lands upon the breakdown of their marriage, and taking into consideration the best interest of their children.
- H. Spouses who are not Members cannot hold any permanent legal interest in Cheam Reserve Lands.

 NOW THEREFORE, THIS CHEAM SPOUSAL REAL PROPERTY LAW IS HEREBY ENACTED A LAW OF CHEAM.

1. TITLE

1.1 The title of this enactment is the *Cheam Spousal Real Property Law*.

2. INTERPRETATION

- 2.1 For the purposes of this Law, terms have the same definitions as in the *Cheam Land Code* except as set out below.
- 2.2 The following definitions apply in this Law:

"Court" means any court of competent jurisdiction and includes:

- (a) a judge or justice of the peace appointed under federal, provincial or Cheam laws to enforce Cheam laws;
- (b) a court where there is a Designated Judge as defined under the federal Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act, S.C. 2013, c. 20; but
- (c) unless there is a contrary requirement in an applicable law, administration agreement or the rules of court, in relation to orders regarding the division of value of Family Homes, means the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

"Domestic Agreement" means an agreement in writing signed by the Parties and by a witness in which the parties agree on their respective rights and obligations under the marriage or on separation, with respect to the possession, use, or division of an Interest in Cheam Reserve Lands, and includes:

(a) a pre-nuptial entered into between Spouses who intend to marry or live in a Common-law Marriage;

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- (b) a Marriage Agreement entered into between Spouses who are married to each other; and
- (c) a Separation Agreement entered into between Spouses who are married to each other and are living separate and apart.

"Family Home" means:

- (a) a family home affixed to Cheam Reserve Lands that is or if the Spouses have separated, was at the time of separation - occupied by one or both Spouses as the family home or that is mutually intended by the Spouses to be occupied by one or both of them as the family home, but, despite the common law relating to real property, excludes and is separate from the land or CP or Allotment on which the home is situated; but
- (b) excludes Cheam's interest in a rental, social housing, or mortgaged home.

"Life Estate" means a right of a Spouse or Child to occupy the Family Home for a period determined by agreement, by the Courts or by law, to a maximum of the rest of their life.

"Mediator" means a mediator listed on the Roster of Mediators BC.

"Primary Care" means physical custody and day-to-day care of a Child to protect the well-being of the Child.

"Spouse", despite section 2.1, means an individual who is married or living with another, whether by a domestic partnership, traditional, religious or civil ceremony, and includes Common-law spouse and, for the purposes of this Law and subject to this Law, includes a former Spouse after the marriage has been dissolved by decree absolute of divorce or by judgment of nullity.

3. APPLICATION OF LAW

ONLY TO RESERVE LAND

This Law applies only to Cheam Reserve Lands and not to the rest of the Cheam Territory. 3.1

ONLY TO MEMBERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

- This Law applies only to Cheam Members and their Spouses in relation to a breakdown of a 3.2 marriage or Common-law Marriage.
- This Law does not apply to a Family Home held by either Spouse, or both Spouses, where neither 3.3 Spouse is a Member.

ONLY TO FAMILY HOMES

- This Law applies only to Family Homes and, except where explicitly stated, not to other Interests 3.4 in or on Cheam Reserve Lands as defined in the Cheam Land Code or in this Law.
- The British Columbia Family Relations Act, R.S.B.C. 1996 c. 128 and the Canada Divorce Act, 1985, 3.5 c. 3 (2nd Supp.) apply as modified by this Law and to the extent possible subject to this Law, the Land Code, and the common law but this Law prevails to the extent of any conflict with the British Columbia Family Relations Act in relation to:

Page 4 of 15 E.C.

- (a) use and possession of the Family Home; and
- (b) the division of value of the Family Home and any Interests or assets in or on Cheam Reserve Lands.
- Despite paragraph 3.5, the fact that a Family Home does not include future or contingent 3.6 Interests in Lands shall not be taken to confer jurisdiction upon a Court over those Interests under this Law.
- Nothing in this Law limits the application of valid and applicable federal or provincial laws in 3.7 respect of matrimonial causes or any rights or remedies available in those laws, except to the extent that such laws deal expressly or implicitly with Family Homes or Lands, and to that extent this Law shall apply.
- Unless otherwise specified in this Law, nothing in this Law relieves either Spouse of the 3.8 requirement to observe the rules and procedures of a Court in relation to matrimonial causes.

DOES NOT APPLY TO WILLS AND ESTATES

For greater certainty, a Spouse cannot commence an action after the death of the other Spouse 3.9 to claim, take, or pursue an Interest in Cheam Reserve Lands held by the other Spouse under this Law, and his or her interest will be determined by the applicable law governing the estate of the deceased Spouse.

CONTINUATION WHERE SPOUSE DIES DURING PROCEEDINGS

3.10 Despite paragraph 3.9 where a proceeding has been commenced under Part 6 of this Law, and either Spouse dies before all issues relating to the Family Home have been determined by a Court, the surviving Spouse may continue the proceeding.

SUBJECT TO OTHER LAWS

- 3.11 The rights and remedies recognized in this Law are subject to any Laws passed under Part 2 of the Cheam Land Code in relation to:
 - (a) the removal and punishment of persons trespassing on Lands or frequenting Lands for prohibited purposes;
 - (b) prevention of nuisance; or
 - (c) protection of the community.

CHEAM MORTGAGES AND HOUSING LAWS AND PREVAIL

3.12 Nothing in this Law affects the rights or priority of Cheam if Cheam has guaranteed a mortgage or holds a mortgage or legal or financial interest in a Family Home and, for greater certainty, Cheam Laws, and agreements relating to housing take priority and prevail over any provision of this Law or order made under it, to the extent of any conflict.

SUBSECTION 89(1) OF THE INDIAN ACT

3.13 This Law applies despite subsection 89(1) of the Indian Act.

Page **5** of **15** EC

4. DOMESTIC AGREEMENTS

4.1 It is the purpose and intention of this Law to respect written agreements between Spouses or people intending to become Spouses as to the use, possession, occupancy, disposition, or partition of an Interest in Cheam Reserve Lands, including a Family Home.

REGISTRATION OF AGREEMENTS

- 4.2 All Spouses or persons who are or were or are intending to become Spouses are encouraged to register their Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreements.
- 4.3 A Spouse or persons who are or were or are intending to become Spouses may submit an application to the Lands Manager to register a Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreement in the First Nations Land Registry.
- 4.4 A Pre-Nuptial or Marriage Agreement may contain a provision asserting that a structure is a Family Home.
- 4.5 The Lands Manager will register any Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreement submitted under paragraph 4.2 provided that:
 - (a) the applicant provides an original agreement or a certified true copy;
 - (b) the agreement is submitted by a Spouse and signed and dated by both Spouses with their signatures notarized;
 - (c) the applicant provides proof of membership in Cheam of at least one of the Spouses;
 - (d) the applicant pays the prescribed fee, if any;
 - (e) the agreement provides the legal description of any Interest referred to in the agreement and proof of title; and
 - (f) for each Interest referred to in the agreement:
 - i. the applicant provides proof that they or their Spouses are the sole owner of the Interests, or
 - ii. if an Interest in the Agreement is shared with other parties, a signed and notarized statement from each other shared Interest-holders stating that they do not object to the Interest being included in the Agreement.

AGREEMENTS VALID AND BINDING

4.6 Subject to this Law and all applicable laws, a provision in a Domestic Agreement that reflects the agreement of the Spouses with respect to an Interest in Cheam Reserve Lands, including a Family Home, is valid, binding, and enforceable.

INTERESTS, RIGHTS AND LIFE ESTATES TO NON-MEMBERS

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Page **6** of **15**

- A Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreement may provide an Interest or grant rights to a 4.7 Family Home to a Spouse or Child who is not a Member but such Interests and rights shall not, in any case, be greater than:
 - (a) a non-transferable lease of up to the maximum time prescribed by Council in a regulation, or
 - (b) a Life Estate
 - and any such Interest or right that is greater than paragraph (a) or (b) in respect of a non-Member is void.
- 4.8 Despite paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7, any provision in a Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreement is void if it purports to give, transfer, award, acknowledge, or create an Allotment or a CP in favour of a Spouse or any individual who is not a Member.

COURT MAY SET ASIDE OR VARY AGREEMENTS

- Subject to this Law, a Court may, on application, set aside or vary a provision of a Domestic 4.9 Agreement with respect to a Family Home:
 - (a) if a Spouse failed to disclose to the other Spouse all of that Spouse's Interests in Cheam Reserve Lands, or any material information in respect of those Interests;
 - (b) if a Spouse did not understand the nature or consequences of the provision;
 - (c) if there is evidence of abuse or coercion; or
 - (d) otherwise in accordance with the common law or the law of equity or contract.

PAST AND FUTURE AGREEMENTS VALID

4.10 This Part applies whether the parties entered into the Pre-Nuptial, Marriage or Separation Agreement on, before or after the date that this Law comes into force and effect.

5. FAMILY HOME

How to Determine Family Home

- Whether or not a structure or Interest is a Family Home is a question of fact that may be 5.1 determined by a court.
- Where part of a Family Home is normally used for a purpose other than residential purposes, the 5.2 Family Home includes only that part of the structure or structures that may reasonably be regarded as necessary for use and enjoyment as the family residence.

NOTICE

5.3 Subject to the limitations inherent in the nature of Cheam Reserve Lands and to paragraphs 4.7 and 6.20 [no transfer of CPs to non-Members] and to other factors set out in this Law:

Page **7** of **15**

(a) where a person or entity proceeds to realize upon an encumbrance or execution against a Family Home or an Interest that affects the Family Home, both Spouses are entitled to written notice respecting the claim and its enforcement or realization.

LIMITS ON SALES AND ENCUMBRANCES

- No Spouse shall dispose of or encumber a Family Home unless: 5.4
 - (a) the other Spouse consents in writing;
 - (b) the other Spouse joins in and signs the instrument of disposal or encumbrance;
 - (c) the other Spouse has released all rights in respect of the disposition or encumbrance by Pre-Nuptial, Marriage, or Separation Agreement;
 - (d) a Court order has authorized the transaction; or
 - (e) a Court has released the Family Home from the application of this section.
- The Spouse who disposed of or encumbered the interest or right in or to the Family Home has the 5.5 burden of proving that the other Spouse consented to the disposition or encumbrance.

ACCESS TO COURT

COOPERATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION ENCOURAGED

- Any Spouse may contact the Lands Manager of the Cheam Administration Office for information 6.1 and resources relating to mediation and dispute resolution.
- Spouses are encouraged to resolve their differences regarding any matter addressed in this Law 6.2 through cooperative discussion and mediation or alternative dispute resolution.

GENERAL ACCESS TO COURT

- Where Spouses are unable to resolve their differences regarding any matter addressed in this 6.3 Law, they may apply to the Court for a resolution of their dispute.
- In the event of the breakdown of a marriage or a relationship involving Common-law Spouses, a 6.4 Spouse may apply to a Court to:
 - (a) enforce a Domestic Agreement;
 - (b) determine a dispute in relation to a Family Home; or
 - (c) deal with any matter provided for under this Law or any applicable law.

TIME LIMIT

A Spouse seeking to apply for an order under this Part must apply before their divorce or within 6.5 one year after their divorce has been granted by a Court.

EMERGENCY ORDERS

Page **8** of **15** E_C

Law implemented: September 20, 2017

- 6.6 The Court may, on *ex parte* application by a Spouse (without notice to the other Spouse), make an emergency exclusive occupation order for the Family Home in favour of that Spouse for a period of up to 90 days, whether or not the Spouse is a Member and whether or not a Child is involved, if the Court concludes that:
 - (a) family violence has occurred; and
 - (b) the order should be made to help ensure the immediate protection of the Spouse or a Child who resides in the Family Home.
- 6.7 An order under paragraph 6.6 must include a provision directing a peace officer to enforce any provision of the order if requested to do so by the applicant Spouse.
- 6.8 An order under paragraph 6.6 may include any or all of the following additional provisions:
 - (a) a provision requiring the Spouse of the applicant Spouse and any other person to vacate the Family Home and prohibiting them from returning to the Family Home for the duration of the order;
 - (b) a provision directing a peace officer to remove the applicant's Spouse and any other person from the Family Home;
 - (c) a restraining order;
 - (d) a provision directing a peace officer to escort the person who is required to vacate back to the Family Home to supervise the removal of personal belongings; or
 - (e) any other provision that the Court considers necessary for the immediate protection of any person who is at risk.
- 6.9 Any person in whose favour or against whom an order is made under paragraph 6.6 may apply to the Court to have the order varied or revoked at any point while the order remains in force.

COURT ORDERS

- 6.10 If a Spouse disposes of or encumbers a Family Home in contravention of section 5, a Court may, on application:
 - (a) set aside the disposal or encumbrance; or
 - (b) order the Spouse to pay compensation to the other Spouse.
- 6.11 Paragraph 6.106.10(a) does not apply where the person holding the disposition or encumbrance at the time of the application to the Court acquired the disposition or encumbrance for value, in good faith and without notice at the time of acquiring, or making an agreement to acquire the disposition or encumbrance, that the property was a Family Home.
- 6.12 Regardless of which Spouse holds a Family Home, a Court may, on application and subject to this Law:
 - (a) order the delivering up, safekeeping and preservation of the Family Home;

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Page **9** of **15**

Law implemented: September 20, 2017

- (b) direct that one Spouse be given exclusive possession, consistent with this Law, of the Family Home:
 - i. for such period as the Court may direct; or
 - ii. for up to a maximum period prescribed by Council by regulation, in accordance with Cheam Laws and policies, provided all outstanding mortgages and debts in relation to the Family Home are paid or paid out;
- (c) release any aspect or encumbrance relating to the Family Home from the application of this Part;
- (d) authorize a disposition or encumbrance consistent with Cheam law of a Spouse's Interest in a Family Home, subject to the other Spouse's right of exclusive possession as ordered;
- (e) make any interim or temporary order to give effect to the purposes of this Law or to protect the rights of a Spouse; and
- (f) make any ancillary order, including an order as to costs, that the Court deems necessary to give effect to this Law.
- 6.13 A Court, in considering whether to direct that one Spouse have exclusive possession of a Family Home, shall be guided by the principle that the parent with Primary Care of a child should have possession of the Family Home for a period sufficient to ensure that the child, or the youngest child if there is more than one child:
 - (a) has a stable and familiar home for a reasonable period of time until another option is potentially available;
 - (b) reaches the age of majority or, if they are dependent on the Spouse, for a reasonable time period after the age of majority, provided that this is consistent with the best interests of the child or children;

but any such order shall not exceed the maximum time limit prescribed by Council by regulation.

- 6.14 Where both Spouses share joint custody of a child or children, the principle set out in paragraph 6.13 shall be adapted to favour the Spouse who has Primary Care if there is one.
- 6.15 In applying the principle set out in paragraph 6.13, a Court may have regard to:
 - (a) the fact that one or more of the children are not Members;
 - (b) any illness or disabilities of any of the children and whether such illness or disabilities support continuing possession or occupation of the Family Home past the time the child with disabilities reaches that age of majority; and
 - (c) whether the Spouse seeking exclusive possession of the Family Home is in a relationship with, or is receiving support from, somebody other than their former Spouse.
- 6.16 Subject to this Law, a Court may make any determination about a Family Home and may make orders that are necessary, reasonable or related to give effect to the determination, including:

Page 10 of 15

- (a) a declaration as to whether a structure is in fact a Family Home;
- (b) an order that a Family Home be transferred to one Spouse, who is a Member, exclusively on an interim or permanent basis;
- (c) an order that a Family Home be subject to a lease by one Spouse to the other Spouse for a term of months or years, subject to such terms and conditions as the Court deems just, taking into account the best interests of any children living in the Family Home, and not exceeding the maximum time period prescribed by Council by regulation;
- (d) an order granting an easement or access for a specified period of time across a CP or Allotment held or shared by one Spouse for the purpose of enabling the other Spouse to access the Family Home;
- (e) an order that restrains either Spouse from disposing of or transferring a Family Home or an Interest in it, either legally or beneficially, pending the granting of the divorce;
- (f) an order directing one or both Spouses to pay specified amounts of money in relation to rent, lease, mortgage, tax, utilities, repairs, legal fees, or other payments relating to the Family Home;
- (g) an order that one Spouse make a compensation payment, either immediately or once a mortgage is paid off or factors allow for value to be accessed to pay, to the other Spouse to recognize the contribution which the other Spouse has made to the acquisition, rent, mortgage payments, upkeep and/or improvement of the Family Home;
- (h) an order that one Spouse pay compensation to the other Spouse if the Family Home or an Interest in it has been encumbered or disposed of; or
- (i) any appropriate equitable order where one Spouse has intentionally, recklessly, or fraudulently damaged, encumbered or disposed of the Family Home or an Interest relating to it.

DIVISION OF VALUE

- 6.17 When a conjugal relationship breaks down and there is a separation or divorce, each Spouse, on application to a Court, is entitled to the following, subject to any agreements under Part 4, to this Law, and any determinations or orders of the Court:
 - (a) an amount equal to up to twenty percent (20%) of the value of the Family Home on the later of the day on which:
 - the Spouses were married or confirmed as Common-Law Spouses; or i.
 - ii. the Spouses acquired the Family Home,

Law implemented: September 20, 2017

- (b) plus an amount up to the maximum prescribed by Council by regulation to take into account:
 - any mortgage payments made between the day set out in paragraph 6.17 and the valuation date determined by law or by the Court for the breakdown of the conjugal relationship; and

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- ii. for each Spouse, the difference between the demonstrated payments made by that Spouse towards improvements to the Family Home, between the day set out in paragraph 6.17 and the valuation date inclusive, and the amount of any debts or other liabilities outstanding on the valuation date that were assumed to make the payments.
- 6.18 In making any order under paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17, the Court shall begin with the presumptions set out in paragraph 6.17, and subject to the maximum percentage or amount prescribed by regulation, shall consider whether this presumption should be varied in light of any factors including the following factors:
 - (a) the date when the Family Home was acquired or disposed of;
 - (b) the duration of the marriage or Common-law Marriage;
 - (c) the duration of the period during which the Spouses have lived separate and apart;
 - (d) the needs of each Spouse to become or remain economically independent;
 - (e) direct or indirect financial contributions of each Spouse toward the acquisition, rent, mortgage payments, upkeep, improvement, or increased value of the Family Home, including contributions through child rearing responsibilities;
 - (f) any relevant order or award that the Court is making or has previously made for the Spouses pursuant to the provincial Family Relations Act or the federal Divorce Act or their successors; and
 - (g) an other factor which the Court considers relevant to an equitable division of the value of the Family Home.
- 6.19 In making any compensation order under this Law, the Court shall:
 - (a) base the compensation on a valuation of the Family Home:
 - on objective purchase and sale information from similar homes on similar Reserve lands;
 - ii. numbers agreed by the Spouses; or
 - iii. a valuation of the Family Home by a qualified appraiser experienced in on-Reserve appraisals, which accounts for the limitations on the ownership rights associated with it and, in particular, the feasibility of selling or leasing the Family Home on Reserve lands; and
 - (b) not make an order against a Member Spouse after a breakdown with a non-Member Spouse, if that Member Spouse demonstrates that the order is likely to unreasonably force the Member Spouse to move out of the Family Home.

CERTAIN ORDERS PROHIBITED

Law implemented: September 20, 2017

- 6.20 No order shall be made under this Part that results in:
 - (a) a CP or Allotment being transferred to anyone who is not a Member; or
 - (b) a sale, partition or transfer of a CP or Allotment.

Page **12** of **15**

COURT MAY VARY ORDERS

- 6.21 A Court may, on application, vary any declaration or order granted under this Part is:
 - (a) there is a material change in circumstance;
 - (b) there is evidence of fraud, abuse, or coercion; or
 - (c) the Court determines that fairness or equity justify a variance.

COPY AND REGISTRATION OF ORDERS

6.22 When a court makes any order under this Law, the Spouse in whose favour the order is made shall provide, without delay, a copy of the order to the Lands Manager who shall register it in the First Nations Land Registry.

7. AMENDMENTS

- 7.1 Substantive amendments to this Law can only be made in accordance with paragraph 3.14 and 9.48 of the *Cheam Land Code*.
- 7.2 Despite paragraph 7.1 of this Law, Council may authorize minor amendments to the Law including:
 - (a) amendments to correct typographical errors;
 - (b) amendments required to reference any relevant new or amended Cheam laws;
 - (c) amendments ordered by any Court; and
 - (d) amendments which serve to correct typos or clarify the Law, where there is no reasonable dispute about the intention underlying the original provision.

8. REGULATIONS

- 8.1 Council may make any regulations it considers necessary or advisable for purposes under this Law.
- 8.2 For certainty, the powers of Council under subsection 8.1 include the power to make regulations:
 - (a) for any purpose in relation to which regulations are provided for in this Law;
 - (b) prescribing any matter or thing referred to in this Law as prescribed or to be prescribed;
 - (c) respecting the form and content of applications, notices, and other documents that are required or permitted under this Law;
 - (d) setting fees;
 - (e) defining words and expressions that are used but not defined in this Law; and
 - (f) generally for the purpose of giving effect to this Law.

Page **13** of **15**

9. GENERAL PROVISIONS

INTERPRETATION

- 9.1 Headings in this Law are for reference purposes only and do not form part of the Law.
- 9.2 All provisions of this Law are severable. If a Court determines that any provision of this Law is invalid or inapplicable, the provision shall be severed from the Law and the remainder of the Law shall remain in force with any necessary revisions.

RIGHTS OF NON-MEMBERS NON-TRANSFERABLE

9.3 A non-Member who is granted interim occupation or possession rights on Cheam Reserve Lands under this Law cannot dispose of, transfer or assign these rights or pass them to their heirs in a will. As soon as the non-Member ceases use or occupation personally or the term of the order or arrangement expires, all rights are deemed to be terminated.

PENALTIES

- 9.4 A person who contravenes an order made by a Court pursuant to this Law is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term of no more than three months, or to both.
- 9.5 A fine payable under paragraph 9.4 shall be remitted to the Cheam First Nation by the Court, after reasonable Court costs have been deducted.

DATE LAW COMES INTO FORCE

9.6 This Law shall come into force and effect on the date it is passed by Council Resolution after complying with the requirements of sections 4 and 9 of the *Cheam Land Code*.

[Signature page follows.]

Page 14 of 1!

Law implemented: September 20, 2017

SPOUSAL REAL PROPERTY LAW

BE IT KNOWN that this Law entitled *Cheam Spousal Real Property Law* is hereby enacted by a quorum of Council at a duly convened Council of Cheam on September 20, 2017.

Quorum consists of four (4) Council Members.

Chief Ernie Crey

Councillor Dionne Shaw

Councillor Muriel Victor

Councillor Chad Douglas