

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister Responsible for the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2020-21. I am accountable for the preparation of this report and the achievement of the goals and objectives outlined in the 2020-23 Strategic Plan. This report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** under which the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is a category three entity.

This Report highlights important work completed during 2020-21, and identifies opportunities and challenges for the upcoming fiscal year. In 2020-21, the Office demonstrated its commitment to collaborating with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, and people in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the federal government. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation strives to build principle-based relationships with Indigenous people in the province, founded on mutual respect and trust. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to advance initiatives that support Indigenous empowerment and self-determination, and will work with Indigenous communities towards Reconciliation.

I would like to thank Indigenous Governments, Organizations, people and communities for their collaboration and work over the past year, as well as staff at the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation. I look forward to continued progress into 2021-22.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Dempster'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon. Lisa Dempster
Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation

Table of Contents

Office Overview	1
Organizational Structure	1
Staff and Budget.....	2
Highlights and Partnerships	3
Highlights	3
Report on Performance	8
2020-21 Objective and Indicators	9
Opportunities and Challenges	14
Financial Information	16

Office Overview

Organizational Structure

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation supports the Premier and Ministers in advancing Reconciliation and building principle-based relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is at the forefront of working towards Reconciliation with Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation has three core functions: Policy and Planning, Consultations, and Negotiations.

The Policy and Planning function develops policies and provides advice to provincial government departments and agencies on policies and programs affecting Indigenous people.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is also responsible for the development of Indigenous consultation processes and providing advice to provincial government departments and agencies on Indigenous consultation.

Negotiations functions to advance the assessment, negotiation, and implementation of land claims, self-government, and other agreements to promote the self-sufficiency, self-government, and cultural autonomy of Indigenous peoples, and to provide advice on Indigenous rights in the province.

On August 19, 2020 the Honourable Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, announced realignment of a number of government departments, including the creation of the following two entities within Executive Council from the former Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Secretariat: the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat; and the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

The information and results contained in this report pertain to the structure and mandate of the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, which was created during the reporting period.

For more information on the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, please see our website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/iar>

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2021, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation had a staff complement of 11.

As per the Estimates of the Program Expenditure for fiscal year 2020-21, the total net expenditure for the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation for fiscal year 2020-21 was \$1,571,250.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is located on the sixth floor of Confederation Complex, East Block, in St. John's.

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

The reporting period of 2020-21 was a year of COVID-19 and change.

COVID-19 from the beginning of the reporting period on April 1, 2020 to June 2020 caused the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation to develop a new work system. Due to COVID-19, travel and in-person meetings and negotiations for the most part ceased to occur. Notwithstanding this, one major highlight of this period was the success of measures and vaccinations against COVID-19 in Indigenous communities that were taken by the federal and provincial governments, and Indigenous Governments and Organizations. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation supported these efforts.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation also worked with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mushuau Innu First Nation for a new model of service delivery for Natuashish in light of the pandemic.

Former Premier Dwight Ball announced his intention to resign the premiership in February 2020. Premier Furey succeeded him on August 19, 2020.

Former Premier Ball presided over naming four bridges spanning the Trans-Labrador Highway that were named in memory of four exemplary Innu on July 30, 2020. The bridges were named after Penote Michel, Tanien Ashini, Kanikuen Penashue, and Munik Pone.

Officials from both the Province and the Nunatsiavut Government engaged in discussions for several months on arrangements for residential school apologies in each of the five Inuit Communities of Nunatsiavut. Despite all options being explored, it

was not possible under public health measures to accommodate the anticipated number of people interested in attending the public events, while ensuring the health of survivors, family members, and residents of Nunatsiavut. The Nunatsiavut Government acknowledged former Premier Ball's commitment to deliver the apologies. Both governments thank and appreciate the engagement of residential schools survivors, their families and representatives for their efforts in trying to make appropriate arrangements for events in each Nunatsiavut community. The Government remains committed to making these apologies.

On August 19, 2020, Premier Furey created the first Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation with Minister Dempster as its first minister.

Following her swearing in, Minister Dempster immediately began traveling to meet with and discuss the issues and concerns of virtually every Indigenous Government and Organization in the province before the House of Assembly opened on September 14, 2020.

The House of Assembly adjourned on December 14, 2020 with a general election called on January 15, 2021.

The Office continued to work on the Inquiry into the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System, and shortly before the election reached an agreement with the Innu on the three Commissioners for that Inquiry.

Following the general provincial election, Minister Dempster was reappointed as Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation on April 8, 2021.

The Office continued to provide consultation advice on resource developments and other matters. For example, the Office has provided advice with respect to the transfer of Alderon's Kami tenure and forestry in Labrador.

Consultation advice was also provided on the exercises under the auspices of the Department of National Defence in Labrador.

The Office worked with the federal, provincial and territorial governments on the federal government's **United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**.

The Office attended two federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous sessions on racism against Indigenous people in the health care system following the death of Joyce Echaquan, and is cooperating in the development of federal Indigenous health legislation.

Support was provided by the Office to the federal, provincial and territorial meeting of ministers with civil societies and Indigenous Organizations on human rights.

The Office participated in federal, provincial, and territorial implementation of the new federal **Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families**.

Engagement was held by the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard regarding the creation of a new region focused specifically on the Arctic, including the Zone under the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.

Commemoration of Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity to reflect on Reconciliation in light of the experiences of Indigenous children and their descendants at Residential Schools. Orange Shirt Day was founded by Phyllis Webstad, who entered St. Joseph Mission Residential School near Williams Lake, British Columbia in 1973 at age six. Her orange-coloured shirt was taken from her upon arrival.

Wearing orange honours survivors of Residential Schools and their families. By acknowledging the experiences and trauma of Residential Schools, we commit to not repeating past mistakes and affirm our commitment that Every Child Matters.

On September 30, 2020, Minister Lisa Dempster and Premier Andrew Furey joined virtually with the Grade 7 class at Bayview Academy in St. George's to discuss Residential Schools and the significance of Orange Shirt Day.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

On National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2020, former Premier and then Minister of the Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Secretariat, Dwight Ball, called on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to deepen their understanding of Indigenous culture, heritage, and achievements in the province. Former Premier Ball also highlighted activities of the Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Secretariat, including repatriation of the remains of Nonosabut and Demasduit, and work towards the Calls to Action of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Innu Anti-Racism Working Group

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu Nation collaborated on a terms of reference for forming a Joint Innu-NL Working Group. This group is mandated to develop measures ensuring elected officials and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador employees have an understanding and appreciation of Innu culture, values, and history. Measures will be developed for all government programs and services such as health, justice, and corrections. The goal of the Working Group is to ensure that Innu are treated with dignity, equality, and respect.

Commissioning and Siting a Beothuk Statue

On January 26, 2021, Premier Andrew Furey announced that Government, in consultation with Indigenous leaders, will build a statue to commemorate Beothuk people. The statue will be sited on the grounds of Confederation Building in St. John's, and will include a small garden, with benches and lighting to support quiet reflection, and interpretive storyboards.

Indigenous Education Advisory Committee

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is a member of the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee that advises the Department of Education on Indigenous content in the provincial curriculum. The Committee is also comprised of Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Memorial University, and Government departments.

Renaming the June 24th Holiday

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has determined that it is inappropriate to refer to the name of the June holiday as "Discovery Day." In the spirit of Reconciliation, Government has consulted with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to establish a new name. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is working with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and other Government departments, to rename this holiday in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner.

Funding for Torngat Boards

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation provided a 30% funding increase to the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board, the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board, and the Torngat Secretariat. These Boards are created pursuant to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement to provide advice to the Nunatsiavut Government, the provincial government, and the federal government on resource management issues in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area.

Report on Performance

Strategic Issue #1: Enhancing Collaborative Relationships with Indigenous People.

This issue supports the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation's objective of enhancing collaborative relationships with Indigenous people by working to provide advice and support to Government departments about Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and ensuring that the consultation obligations of Government and project proponents are met.

In 2020-21 the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation's work included, among other items: working towards commissioning and siting a statue to commemorate the Beothuk people; Indigenous content in school curriculum; renaming the June 24th holiday and reviewing public monuments, holidays, and observances; and supporting departments in assessment of the recommendations from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

As the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation's work will remain consistent over three years, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will report on the same objectives and indicators on all three years covered by the 2020-2023 Activity Plan.

Goal Statement

By March 31, 2023, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will have continued to enhance the Provincial Government's relationship with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

2020-21 Objective and Indicators

By March 31, 2021, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will have continued to support initiatives to build positive relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

Results Achieved:

The following details the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation's progress toward the achievement of the planned results for 2020-21 with respect to enhancing collaborative relationships.

Indicator 1: Advanced Reconciliation by having worked to complete land claims and self-government agreements with Innu Nation, and continued to implement the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued to negotiate land claims and self-government agreements with the Innu Nation and federal government, as well as worked with the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Implementation Committee.

Indicator 2: Supported the Provincial Government's efforts to provide cultural sensitivity training to elected officials and public servants to ensure understanding of and respect for the cultures, values, and histories of Indigenous people.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continues to develop a training package regarding Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador that will be applicable to all core public servants and elected officials. This training will provide a foundational knowledge of Indigenous peoples, communities, Governments and Organizations, with audiovisual presentations from Indigenous leaders and Elders.

Indicator 3: Continued to provide support as the Provincial Government works towards delivering apologies to residential school survivors and their descendants.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to undertaking its own apology to residential school survivors, in consultation with survivors and leaders of Indigenous Governments and Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador. Public health measures put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this apology from occurring during the reporting period. However, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation remains committed to supporting the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in making this apology once public health measures permit.

Indicator 4: Advised Provincial Government departments and entities on consultation obligations with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked to ensure the consultation obligations of Government and project proponents were met. This included a variety of projects, including providing advice on Indigenous consultation in the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore, and providing advice on forestry and mining projects.

Indicator 5: Provided advice and support to Provincial Government departments and agencies regarding Indigenous interests relating to public policy, programs, and legislation.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation provided advice as a member of and to the Council on Higher Education.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation participated in the Regional Oversight Committee on Oceans Management.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, various provincial government departments, the federal government, and other provincial and territorial governments to promote Indigenous interests. Examples of this work include Indigenous content in the school curriculum, renaming the June 24th holiday, and working with Qalipu First Nation and the federal government to advance enrolment issues.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation also continues to support Government plans to deliver a formal apology to residential schools survivors and their descendants.

Indicator 6: Established an NL-Innu Anti-Racism Working group, mandated to ensure elected officials and public employees have an understanding and appreciation of Innu culture, values and history; via measures developed for all government programs and services such as health, justice, and corrections.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continues to work with Innu Nation and various government departments towards developing measures to ensure that government programs and services are delivered in a way that ensures Innu people are treated with dignity, equality, and respect.

Indicator 7: Continued to organize and sit on the annual Indigenous Leaders Roundtable to establish priority areas and build stronger relationships with Indigenous people in the province.

The 2020 Roundtable was deferred due to COVID-19 and for other considerations.

Indicator 8: Continued to lead the Innu Roundtable, a forum where the province, Federal Government, and Innu Nation discuss issues of mutual importance.

The Innu Roundtable is an Innu-led initiative that includes the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the federal government, and is mandated to address Innu community health and healing initiatives. Unfortunately, COVID-19 prevented Innu Roundtable meetings from occurring during the reporting period.

Indicator 9: Continued to work with the Department of Justice and Public Safety, Innu Nation, and the Federal Government to establish an Inquiry into the treatment, experiences, and outcomes of Innu in the child protection system.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued working toward the establishment of this Inquiry during the reporting period. During the reporting period an agreement with the Innu for the appointment of three Commissioners was reached.

Indicator 10: Supported the establishment of the Muskrat Falls Monitoring and Health Oversight Committee.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked with officials from various government departments, as well as from Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, and NunatuKavut Community Council to reach a draft Terms of Reference.

Indicator 11: Continued to lead the Newfoundland and Labrador team on new federal action to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued to engage in discussions with the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and other departments within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with regards to

federal legislation implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Indicator 12: Supported the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development on Innu action to avail of Indigenous jurisdiction under the federal **First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families Act**.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation provided advice to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development with regards to Innu actions under this federal legislation.

Indicator 13: Continued to support the Office for the Status of Women, and the Department of Justice and Public Safety, as they lead the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's assessment of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued to support departments in assessment of the recommendations from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Indicator 14: Continued to work with Qalipu First Nation on issues within provincial jurisdiction, and communicate on and provide support to Qalipu with regard to enrollment issues.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued to work with and support Qalipu First Nation with respect to enrolment issues and communicated with the federal government on this subject.

Indicator 15: Supported the province's response on national Indigenous initiatives including the implementation of Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission, and recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continued to consider further implementation of the calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked with National and Provincial Indigenous Governments and Organizations on various projects.

Indicator 16: Worked with Provincial Government departments, Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and others to review provincial monuments, symbols, and observances.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continues to engage in a review of public monuments, as well as holidays/observances to ensure Indigenous culture and history are respected, and that monuments and holidays are culturally sensitive.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and the federal government to negotiate land claims, self-government agreements, and other agreements. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to assess any proposed federal changes to land claims, self-government agreements, or other policies that could affect Indigenous Governments and Organizations on their path to self-determination.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to participate in discussions on the federal government's legislation implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to work with various provincial government departments, the federal government, and Indigenous

Governments and Organizations to implement, if requested by Indigenous Governments or Organizations, federal legislation that recognizes the right of Indigenous Governments or Organizations to assume control of child welfare services.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will maintain collaborative relationships with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the federal government, and other provinces and territories to advance the priorities of Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to work with provincial government departments and proponents to ensure the provincial government continues to meet its Duty to Consult with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will also continue to assess the implications of the new federal Impact Assessment Act as it relates to Indigenous engagement for projects on land and in the offshore. Indigenous engagement is crucial to environmental assessment, given the overlap between environmental effects and potential adverse impacts on asserted or established Indigenous rights.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to consider the further implementation of the calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will continue to collaborate with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, provincial government departments, the federal government, and other provinces and territories on the 231 Calls to Justice of Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this report are based on public information provided in the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2021.

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL			
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS SECRETARIATS			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
2.5.03. INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION			
01. Salaries	945,605	1,000,900	1,065,900
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	3,894	4,000	4,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	23,578	84,100	104,100
<i>Supplies</i>	4,951	11,000	11,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	6,163	10,500	10,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	4,908	-	-
02. Operating Accounts	43,494	109,600	129,600
10. Grants and Subsidies	582,151	804,800	689,800
Total: Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation	1,571,250	1,915,300	1,885,300
TOTAL: INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS SECRETARIATS	3,591,487	4,024,900	3,900,800

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