



# JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Reflections on building  
Indigenous relationships

 **MOHAWK**  
COLLEGE



## **What do you know and what do you need to know to become an Indigenous Ally?**

Time to take inventory of what you have learned about Indigenous histories, cultures and contemporary state of affairs. Time to also lay on the table the lingering questions and concerns so that together, we can begin to build relationships based upon principles – honesty, respect, and trust. These are fundamental truths that serve as the foundations for behavioral change that gets us into partnership as allies.



# Purpose of this sharing

**“There are no experts in Iroquois Culture. When we come together we say that we put our minds on the table. That way if you have knowledge that I can use, I can borrow it, and if I have knowledge you can use, you can borrow it. We always have something to learn.”**

Jake Thomas, Cayuga Chief,  
Six Nations of the Grand River  
Territory (1974).

## Core Knowledges to this training

We all have experiences inside and outside of Mohawk College that shape our thinking toward Indigenous peoples. This sharing of ways of thinking are meant to stimulate new thinking, refine current thinking and see things from different points of view. We can only hit the surface of these matters, however, we will provide three outcomes:

- New facts and information on a variety of Indigenous matters
- New perspectives on the meaning of that information
- Increased understanding of what it takes to build alliances and partnerships with Indigenous people that are mutually beneficial.

# First thoughts

We want to take you on a journey through ideas, beliefs and interactions regarding Indigenous peoples so that you can broaden your understandings and improve your personal and professional relationships that impact Indigenous lives.

Following Chief Thomas' teaching, we gather together to share our ideas, exchange our thinking and hopefully, walk away empowered by what has been shared.

We can't answer all the questions you may have, but we can start the conversation. It will be like kindling a fire. It will need constant attention to keep it burning. In former times, our relatives gathered around the household fire to tell stories as a way of passing on knowledge to the next generation. Our ancestors also gathered around the council fire to engage with the Newcomers to create and perpetuate healthy relationships. For Indigenous people, it is all about relationships. Today, we gather around the digital campfire to share a dialogue of social change.

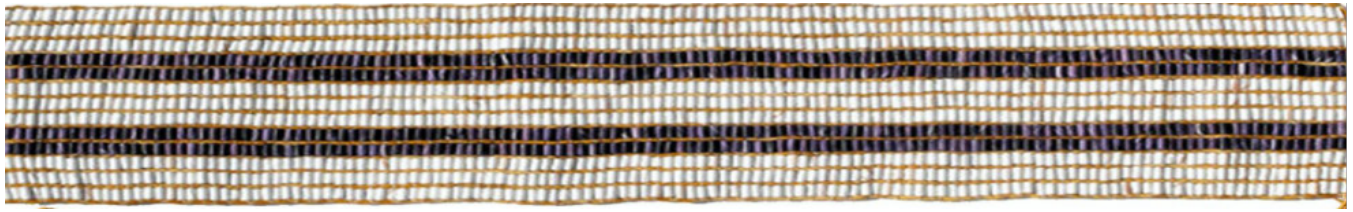


## First steps – beginning our journey

We need to take stock of where our thinking is at regarding Indigenous Peoples. **What have you already learned and experienced?**

- What matters trouble you or require more information?
- Who do you turn to for advice on Indigenous matters?
- We have to take a deep look in the mirror and ask ourselves: What biases do I carry?

Take this self-assessment exam and consider the results as we continue along this journey together.



## Two vessels, side-by-side

The Haudenosaunee have a treaty tradition called the Two Row Wampum which was created after the first treaty was made with the Newcomers in the early 17th century.

The narrative of that wampum belt tells of an agreement in principle that was made in order to foster peaceful relations.

The three main principles that are to be the underlying values of that relationships are to have a Good Mind (desire and commitment to social justice), Peace (using reason rather than coercion) and On-Going Friendship (reliance and dependence upon each other).

The symbols of that first treaty were two vessels floating down the River of Life. One is the Indigenous canoe, and the other is the Ship of the Newcomer. Inside each of these vessels were fully functioning beliefs, laws and cultures. The Two

Row Treaty linked these two vessels together with the premise that each vessel will respect the other, not trying to steer one another's vessel. This was the foundation of all subsequent treaty making.

The Silver Covenant Chain was later used to tie these two vessels together. The metaphor of the Chain was that the three links represent core teachings that will allow us to be faithful allies of one another: Respect, Trust, On-going Friendship.

Our challenge, given the history of colonization is to start with respect. For the purposes of this sharing, let's say that respect is the esteem by which we will value each other. Trust, despite the legacy of betrayal of treaties and Indian Residential Schools, will mean that we will rely on each other to be truthful and not exaggerate or fall upon old stereotypes. On-Going Friendship is the bond that we will form as the result of caring for each other so that together we become stronger to manifest social justice.

**“Inside each of these vessels were fully function beliefs, laws and cultures. The Two Row Treaty linked these two vessels together with the premise that each vessel will respect other, not trying to steer one another's vessel.”**

# Tradition of reconciliation

Our Haudenosaunee neighbors have an ancient tradition of restoring what they call the Good Mind, which was defined by their Great Law of Peace, their governing constitution that is still in operation today.

The Good Mind is about having empathy and compassion for one another, knowing that we cannot have peace unless all matters of justice are resolved to the mutual benefit of all. The Good Mind creates unity and strength. However, trauma can cloud that Good Mind and make it difficult to live in peace.

Whenever a visitor came to the edge of the woods that surrounded a Haudenosaunee village, a simple but profound ceremony took place to ensure that the visitor was bringing a Good Mind:

- **Wiping the Tears** – Restores Vision and Spiritual Wellness
- **Clearing the Ears** – Restores Hearing and Mental Wellbeing
- **Clearing the Throat** – Restores Throat and Healthiness

This tradition has also been incorporated into treaty making councils with the Crown since 1677. At these treaty council the Covenant Chain was employed as a mechanism by which the parties could ensure the long-term stability of friendly relationships by publicly addressing the matters that cause each other harm, and providing some form of reconciliation.

Today, we stand at a new edge of the woods. Colonization has caused many tears to flow; it has clouded our eyes so that we cannot see

each for who we really are; and it has stifled communication between the former allies. Today, we have an opportunity to begin a new process of reconciliation that seeks five new states of being:

- Internal change in minds and systems needs to take place to change the colonized relationship from destructive to constructive.
- People have to move from hate to cooperation and harmony.
- We must stop the cycle of violence and hatred that sometimes transcends generations
- We have to help those injured by colonization to recover their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellness.
- We need help rebuild the integrity of Indigenous identity, beliefs, governance and territories.

Also, we need to jettison old cultural clichés and racial stereotypes. We have to challenge what we have learned, to remove any hidden biases. We have to root out racism, no matter how deeply ingrained it may be in attitudes and systems. At the same time, we need to freely share our concerns and feelings so that our minds are not jaded by hidden resentments or un-addressed matters of importance. This means that we may have difficult conversations. It means that we will not give up on each other as we work our way forward.

**“We need to jettison old cultural clichés and racial stereotypes. We have to challenge what we have learned, to remove any hidden biases. We have to root out racism, no matter how deeply ingrained it may be in attitudes and systems.”**



# Who we are

We are the Indigenous people of this land. Our ancestors have walked this land since time immemorial. They established a relationship to special places out of which developed comprehensive, integrated worldviews and cultures. These settlements grew into self-governing nations operating under their own laws and traditions. We come from a great diversity of way of being Indigenous on this land.

Haudenosaunee, Anishinabek, Métis and Inuit peoples live in the Hamilton Region. We have very different cultural worldviews and different traditions. We speak different languages and have different histories. From time to time, we have to generalize as we explore various dimensions of history, cultures, and experiences. It is important to keep in mind that there are variations on the themes we present, and that there may be slightly different points of view.

We are a very diverse people, more than 600 Indigenous-governed communities, living on 3,100 “Indian Reserves” in Canada,

comprising 28,000 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) (11,000 square miles, 0.2804% of Canada’s land area). We are directly related to Indigenous peoples in the United States. There are 326 “Indian Reservations” in the U.S. (56,200,000 acres, 22,700,000 hectares, 87,800 square miles, 227,000 km<sup>2</sup>; or 2.308% of that country’s land area). There are 574 federally recognized tribes, bands, pueblos, nations, communities and villages. In addition, the various states also recognize 62 Indigenous entities that are not federally recognized.

## Ontario snapshot

(as of 2016 Statistics Canada)

- There are **133** Indigenous communities in Ontario, with a total population of **236,680**.

---

- There are **30** Métis Nation Community Councils representing **120,585** self-identifying Métis people.

---

- There are **3,860** self-identifying Inuit.

---

- **85%** of those identifying as Indigenous live in urban areas.



*“Onondaga longhouse” on the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation (Grand River Reservation) in Canada in the early 1900s. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

# Haudenosaunee

Haudenosaunee, Rotinoshonni, Hodeshonni, are just a few of the many ways to express the collective identity of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and the Tuscarora Nations. Haudenosaunee is the most used form, meaning “People Who Build Longhouses.” The bark covered longhouse could be extended as the families grew. The longest such house was over 450 feet long, dating from about 1550.

However, those nation names are not actually Haudenosaunee names. The nations refer to themselves as follows:

Onöndowagá	Seneca	People of the Big Hill (Originally from Genesee River Region)
Gayogoho:nq	Cayuga	People of the Swamp
Onodagegá	Onondaga	People of the Hills
Onλyota’a	Oneida	People of the Standing Stone
Kanien’keha:ka	Mohawk	People of the Flint
Skaru:rę	Tuscarora	People of the Shirt

## Haudenosaunee cultures in Ontario

This includes the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, our neighbour that is one of the largest Indigenous communities in Canada; Akwesasne Mohawk, near Cornwall; Wahta Mohawk (Gibson) near Gravenhurst; Oneida of the Thames, near London; and Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga), near Deseronto.

Ögwë’ö:weh is a Haudenosaunee term that means the “Original People” or “First People” of this land, it represents the first humans to be created, and also creates a cultural linkage among all of the Indigenous people of this land. Ögwë’ö:weheka:’ means “Our Way of Life,” or the Way of Life of the Ögwë’ö:weh.



# 6 things I learned about Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

By Rosanna Deerchild, [CBC.ca](https://www.cbc.ca).

## 1 It's huge. No, really. You could get lost here.

Six Nations is nestled along the winding Grand River near Brantford, Ont. Of their 26,000 members, 13,000 live in the expansive community that sits among rolling hills in Canada's Carolinian forest. I felt like I wandered into a postcard. You know the one, with the house on the hill, big trees lightly dusted with snow, long winding roads. It wouldn't have surprised me if Santa rolled by in a rez car blasting Robbie Robertson or Logan Staats.

## 2 Six Nations produces a lot of famous people.

As well as the former member of The Band and rising star Staats, many athletes, actors, creators, and political change makers are proud Six Nations members. Some of them include actors Graham Greene and Jay Silverheels (better known as Tonto); Roberta Jamieson, Canada's first indigenous female lawyer; Stan Jonathan, former NHL player with the Boston Bruins (who was clearing his neighbour's driveway while we were visiting! How cool is that?); famed marathon runner Tom Longboat; and one of my favourite poets, Emily Pauline Johnson.

## 3 E. Pauline Johnson's house is a national historic site.

Before Lady Gaga, Madonna and even Cher there was Pauline Johnson, or Tekahionwake. She broke rules before there were even rules to break. The Mohawk poetess and renowned performer was born and raised at Chiefswood, her family homestead. It is a national historic site now, and I was super excited to tour the Victorian-era house with another renowned Mohawk poet — Janet Rogers. This is where Pauline wrote books like *Flint and Feather*, and as I sat at her writing desk where she created this work, I got super Indigi-nerd emotional.

## 4 The Three Sisters — corn, squash and beans are big here. Really big.

They have traditions, ceremonies, stories, recipes, heck even artwork based on the Three Sisters, which the people believe were gifted to them by the Great Spirit.

## 5 Seeing history in real life.

You may remember from grade 10 history class how the Iroquois Confederacy, led by Joseph Brant, allied with the British during the American Revolution. For their loyalty, they were granted a tract of land along the Grand River under the 1784 Haldimand Treaty. Iroquois is a French term — they call themselves the Haudenosaunee, or People of the Longhouse. Their clan system follows a matrilineal line; in other words the women are in charge. I like that!

## 6 Finally remembering all six of the Six Nations.

There are actually six separate nations that make up the people of Six Nations (or 6Nay as the hip locals call it). They are: Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora and Seneca, which is harder to remember than you think. Go, ahead, close your eyes and recite them. There will be a quiz later.



# Anishinawbek cultures in Ontario

- Algonquin
- Chippewa
- Mississauga
- Ojibwa
- Odawa
- Potawatomi
- Saulteaux
- Cree
- Oji-Cree
- Lenape (Munsee-Delaware)

## Terminology, names and identities

The term “Indigenous” refers to all descendants of the original inhabitants of the territories that now make up Canada. This includes what are commonly called First Nations, the Inuit and the Métis. In Canada, the word “Aboriginal” has the same meaning and was more widely used until recently. As the result of the United Nations using the term Indigenous, that term has become more popular.

Other terms that were in common use include the following:

- **American Indian/Canadian Indian**  
When Columbus thought that he had arrived in the Indies, he described the inhabitants as “los Indios,” which became “Indians” to the English. Many have objected to this term because it is a misnomer.
- **Amerindian**  
A term invented by scholars to distinguish “Indians” of the Americas from Eastern Indians from India.
- **Aboriginal**  
A term that means the original people of a territory, taken from the name of the Aborigines of Australia, this term began to be used in the 1970s in Canada.
- **Native American/Native Canadian**  
A term that became popular in the 1980s as an alternative to American Indian/Canadian Indian, but resulted in confusion as any one born on the U.S or Canada was considered a “native” American/Canadian.
- **Native People**  
A term used in Canada in the early 1980s that was meant to include the “Indians,” Inuit (Eskimo) and the Métis (French and Indian mixed bloods)
- **First People**  
A variation of the above that came into fashion in Canada in the late 1980s.
- **First Nations**  
A more recent term in use in Canada to give the Native Nations recognition as existing prior to “founding” colonial nations of French and England.

## Métis cultures in Ontario

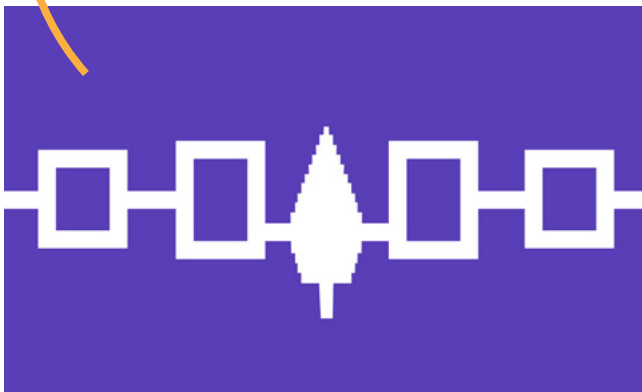
The Métis people in Ontario are historically based in the fur trade where First Nations women and European traders intermarried and whose “mixed-ancestry” descendants developed a unique identity and culture. Today, Métis people live in both urban and rural areas across the province. Michif is a Métis language spoken in Ontario.

# What Do You Need To Know – Summary

- Indigenous peoples are diverse with many different cultures, worldviews, languages and histories.
- European colonists, often blinded by their own cultural or religious worldview, could not, or would not, accept Indigenous peoples as equals, leading to a host of actions that reduced Indigenous peoples to becoming paupers in their own homelands.
- Treaties with Indigenous Nations defined the Canadian master narrative; and how treaties are honored, or not, defines the Canadian character.
- Indigenous history did not start with the arrival of the Vikings, nor did it stop with the closing of Indian residential schools. It continues to today.
- Canada has inherited obligations to Indigenous Nations from the Crown, and therefore, owes Indigenous peoples goods and services in exchange for the lands that Canadians occupy and the use of resources by which they have become enriched.
- Indigenous peoples are allies, not subjects, of the Crown.
- To fully understand history, we have to consider Indigenous oral traditions and Indigenous knowledge, in addition to eyewitness accounts, documented history and historical documents.
- Canadians have benefited materially and culturally from their engagements with Indigenous peoples.
- The Indian Act, Indian Residential Schools and the 60s Scoop have had a negative impact on the stability of Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities; often resulting in negative social indicators.
- Canada has begun to turn the page away from racism and has begun to take the long road of healing and reconciliation, yet much more needs to be accomplished to recovery Indigenous equality.
- Indigenous peoples, although suffering from the legacy of colonization, are still here with nearly 600 First Nations and 3,100 communities across Canada.
- Indigenous peoples still have faith that Canadians will do the right thing.

# Ten important points to remember about the Haudenosaunee

Haudenosaunee leaders, scholars and educators developed a list of core understandings in the 1970s that still remain valid today.



*"Five Lands belt/Hiawatha Belt" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*



# 1

We exist as distinct peoples in the 20th century. The Haudenosaunee are unique in that we maintain one of the very few traditional governments in North America, free from the oppression of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and free from the lunacy of tribal elections. Our leaders are selected according to the oldest constitutional democratic systems.

# 2

We live a contemporary lifestyle and are not frozen in the past. While we still maintain practices that are rooted in the past, we apply those practices to define our place in the modern world. Our traditional culture is forward thinking, to assure our long-term survival. Our culture allows us to deal with the realities of the modern world, not by embracing any new fad, but continuing to absorb new traditions on our own terms.

# 3

We, like other peoples, continue to maintain our culture. Culture is not just the relics of the past, but patterns of thought and cycles of behavior that form the basic building blocks of our lives.

4

We, like other peoples, have our own world view. To say we are Haudenosaunee means that we have deep seated beliefs in our traditions and are committed to their survival. We are connected to a living earth and a spiritual universe. We have sacred duties to fulfill.

7

We have made many contributions to world culture. The Haudenosaunee have been instrumental in colonial history. After two hundred years of contact, the emerging American settlers adopted many Haudenosaunee ideas and practices in order to survive in our land.

5

We continue to live on portions of our original territories. Our lands were never conquered by outsiders. We never consented to American or Canadian authority over our territories. Our lands were never willingly placed in trust with the United States or Canada, as are most other reserves or reservations. Our current territories were defined by various federal treaties.

8

We have a unique relationship to the United States, Canada, Great Britain and other nations. The federal treaties we have are very distinctive and provide the Haudenosaunee with a special status in law. We maintain government-to-government relations. We are not wards of the United States. We are independent nations, sovereign and free in our own territories.

6

We maintain our distinct laws and customs. Within our territories, where the Council of Chiefs are the sole governing authority, our own laws are in place, not the laws of the United States or Canada. We operate the Grand Council of Chiefs of the Six Nations under the Great Law of Peace which promotes peace, power and righteousness.

9

The portrayal of Indigenous peoples in the media perpetuates stereotypes that affect our relationships to non-Indigenous. Most people are seriously misinformed about the Haudenosaunee because of distorted textbooks, misguided movies and biased history books. Seldom have people been able to hear directly from the recognized traditional people of the Haudenosaunee to counteract the negative racial and cultural stereotypes perpetuated by American popular culture.

10

We are committed to maintaining our survival as distinct peoples. We believe that the lessons from Creation; the guidance of the Original Instructions; the unity of the Great Law of Peace; and the moral imperatives of the Gaiwiio, the "Good Word," provide the roadmap to our future.

# What is reconciliation?

Reconciliation aims to encourage cooperation and improve harmony between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. It involves improving relationships by developing understanding of how history has shaped our relationship with each other and the importance of respecting each other's culture. Reconciliation is important not only to Indigenous people but also to Canada's future as a cohesive nation.

## **Eight key issues for Reconciliation (modified from a 1997 Australian model):**

### **1. Understanding country**

The importance of land and waterways in Indigenous societies

### **2. Improving relationships**

Better relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the wider community

### **3. Valuing cultures**

Recognizing Indigenous cultures as a valued part of Canadian heritage

### **4. Sharing histories**

A sense for all Canadians of a shared ownership of their history

### **5. Addressing disadvantage**

A greater awareness of the causes of Indigenous Peoples' disadvantage

### **6. Responding to custody levels**

A greater community response to addressing the underlying causes of Indigenous child apprehensions

### **7. Agreeing on a document**

Advancing the process of reconciliation by a document of reconciliation, court settlements, TRC Report

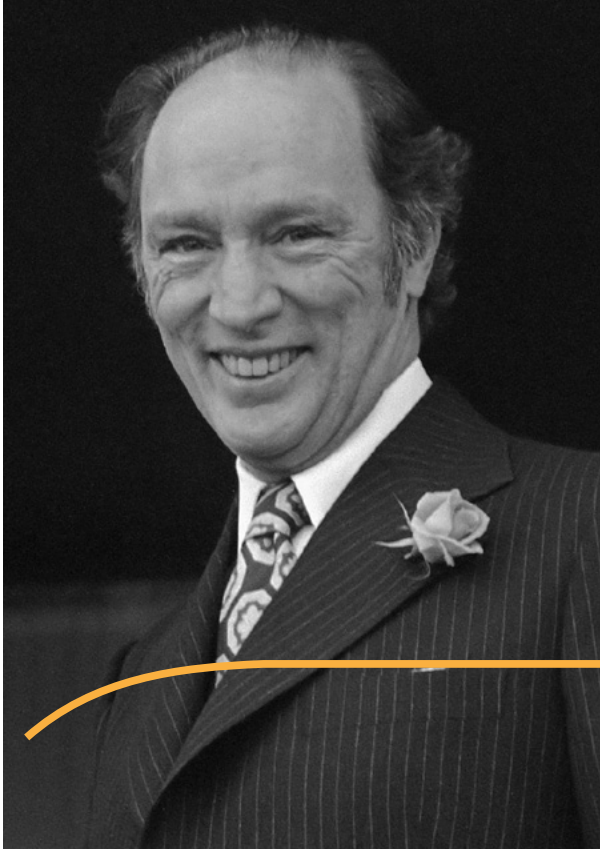
### **8. Controlling destinies**

Greater opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to recover their identities, cultures, languages and sovereignties in order to take control their destinies

## What does reconciliation entail?

The social and political movement in Canada toward reconciliation has been predicated upon certain principles. Reconciliation as a conflict handling mechanism entails the following core elements:

- Honest acknowledgment of the harm/injury each party has inflicted on the other
- Sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done
- Readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting the injury
- Readiness of the conflicting parties to 'let go' of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury
- Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury
- Sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible
- Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship



## Prime Minister's father's plan for us

In 1969 Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau tabled the White Paper called the "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy."

The paper called for abolishing the Indian Act and all existing treaties. "Indian Status" would be abolished and that Indigenous people would become full Canadian citizens. All programs that provide special consideration for Indigenous peoples would be eliminated.

The hope was that by doing so, this would "enable the Indian people to be free—free to develop Indian cultures in an environment of legal, social and economic equality with other Canadians."

The backlash was extreme and viewed as a new form of assimilation. The White Paper was trashed in 1970. There has been confusing policy shifts since that time.



## The current Prime Minister's plan for us

In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his government would immediately move on the following five promises the Liberals made during the recent election campaign:

- Launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.
- Make significant investments in Indigenous education.
- Lift the two per cent cap on funding for Indigenous programs.
- Implement all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Repeal all legislation unilaterally imposed on Indigenous people by the previous government.

The inquiry was completed. More funds have been committed to Indigenous education. The funding cap is still in force. We have just begun to understand how to implement some of the Calls to Action. A review of federal legislation ended with the departure of Jody Wilson-Raybould as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General in the Trudeau Cabinet in 2019.

*Photos: "[Pierre Trudeau](#)" and "[Justin Trudeau](#)" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

# Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples

**"Today, our Government is taking another important step to renew Canada's nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples. Working in partnership with Indigenous leaders, communities, and youth, the Working Group will use these Principles to take a whole-of-government approach to **assess and recommend statutory change and new policies to best meet our constitutional obligations and international commitments to Indigenous peoples.**"**

Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, 2017.

In 2017, the federal government issued a statement of "Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples" (summarized here):

1. Recognize the inherent right of self-government.
2. Advance Reconciliation as a constitutional responsibility (section 35).
3. Honour of the Crown will guide all dealing.
4. Indigenous self-government is a distinct order of government.
5. Treaties are acts of reconciliation based upon mutual recognition and respect
6. Free, prior and informed consent on actions that impact rights, lands, territories and resources.
7. Crown has fiduciary obligation to respecting, and implementing requires "high threshold of justification" for any proposed infringement.
8. Renew a fiscal relationship to support economic partnerships and resource development.
9. Reconciliation is ongoing Indigenous-Crown relationships.
10. Take a distinction-based approach to ensure Indigenous unique rights, interests and circumstances.



# The Trudeau Administration affirmed the following:

- All relations with Indigenous peoples need to be based on the recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government.
- Reconciliation is a fundamental purpose of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
- The honour of the Crown guides the conduct of the Crown in all of its dealings with Indigenous peoples.
- Indigenous self-government is part of Canada's evolving system of cooperative federalism and distinct orders of government.
- Treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between Indigenous peoples and the Crown have been and are intended to be acts of reconciliation based on mutual recognition and respect.
- Meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples aims to secure their free, prior and informed consent when Canada proposes to take actions that impact them and their rights on their lands, territories and resources.
- Respecting and implementing rights is essential and that any infringement of Section 35 rights must by law meet a high threshold of justification, which includes Indigenous perspectives and satisfies the Crown's fiduciary obligations.
- Reconciliation and self-government require a renewed fiscal relationship, developed in collaboration with Indigenous nations, that promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnership and resource development.
- Reconciliation is an ongoing process that occurs in the context of evolving Indigenous-Crown relationships.
- A distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of the First Nations, the Métis Nation and Inuit are acknowledged, affirmed and implemented.

Source: [Government of Canada](#).

## Overview of a “recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights” framework

In 2018, the federal government tabled a document that stated a new focus:

- Canada will remove barriers that have prevented the exercise of Indigenous rights, including inherent and treaty rights, and the achievement of true self-determination by Indigenous Nations and Collectives.
- Indigenous peoples will have flexibility to determine their own paths forward and governance systems for their Nations and Collectives.
- Rights-holding Indigenous Nations and Collectives will have the choice to immediately exercise certain jurisdictions, consistent with their constitutions.
- Canada will impose accountability measures on itself to ensure that rights, treaties and agreements are fully implemented.
- Independent bodies could be established to keep Canada further accountable.
- New dispute mechanisms could become available so that Indigenous peoples have access to remedies outside of costly, adversarial court processes.

# What is Indigenous knowledge?

**“Indigenous theory is rooted intimately within Indigenous epistemologies, worldviews, cultures and traditions. Indigenous wholistic theory is multi-layered, encompassing the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical elements of being. We also acknowledge our past, present and future.”**

Dr. Kathy Absolon, Flying Post Anishinaabekwe, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, 2010.

For our program, Indigenous knowledge is the wisdom that is derived from thousands of generations living in relationship to place. It includes cultural, social, political, and spiritual connection to place and the culture that allowed people to live well in that place. Such knowledge is codified in the Creation stories, Original Instructions, ceremonies of thanksgiving, and a way of life that still lives in the oral history of the Indigenous communities.

## What are the Seven Grandfather Teachings?

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are values and beliefs needed to live well on the Earth. The seven teachings have been given to the Anishinabek people to guide them in living a good life, living without conflict and living in peace:

Humility	<b>Dbaadendiziwin</b>	To think lower of oneself in relation to all that sustains us
Bravery	<b>Aakwa'ode'ewin</b>	To live with a solid, strong heart
Honesty	<b>Gwekwaadziwin</b>	To live correctly and with virtue
Wisdom	<b>Nbwaakaawin</b>	To live with vision
Truth	<b>Debwewin</b>	To speak only to the extent we have lived or experienced
Respect	<b>Mnaadendimowin</b>	To go easy on one another and all of Creation
Love	<b>Zaagidwin</b>	Unconditional love between one another including all of Creation, humans and non-humans

# Things every Canadian needs to know



**“There are chiefs and warriors among the Six Nations who take the position that they are not subjects of the Crown, but are allies; and that is the reason I should like to have the First Minister present, tell me what position the Six Nation Indians occupy with reference to the Crown, and what was the nature of their treaty.”**

(House of Commons 1880a: 1490) Territory (1974).

## Are we subjects or allies?

There have been several commissions, reports, court cases and inquiries that have tried to answer that basic question. What is the status of the Six Nations? The answers have shifted through time, subject to prevailing politics, biases and racism.

From a Haudenosaunee point of view:

- We come from sovereign nations who were never conquered nor surrendered our right to govern ourselves.
- We made treaties with the Crown that were meant to last forever. The honour of the Crown means that the Crown keeps its word, fulfills its obligation and does not lie.
- Our warriors have stood as allies with the Crown since the French and Indian Wars. We still consider ourselves as citizens of our Indigenous nations, with treaty relations with the Government of Canada.

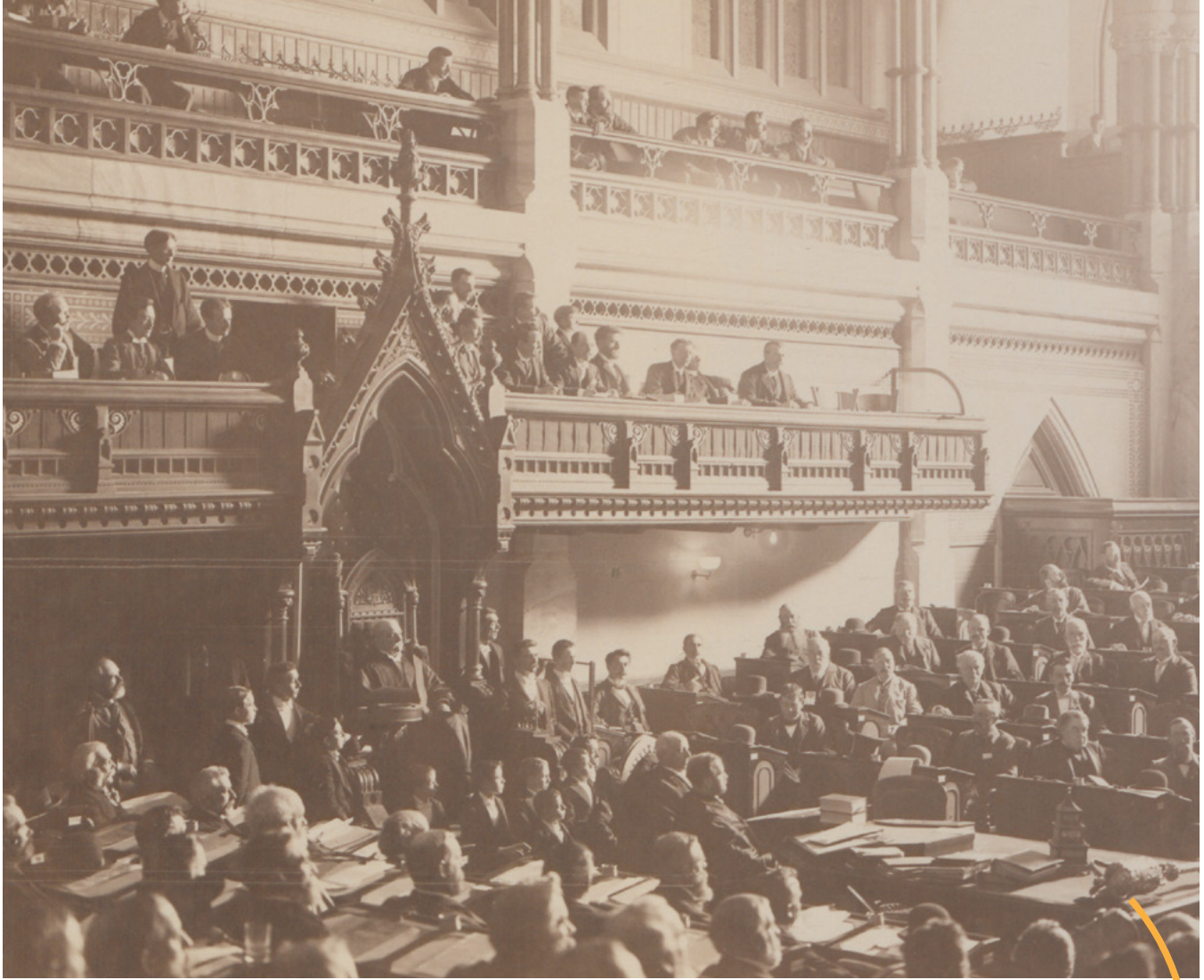
In the 1830s and 1840s, Canada began to change its political attitude toward Indigenous peoples. Up to that time, Great Britain and Canada depended upon Indigenous nations as allies in their fight against France and the United States. Once peace came to the continent, such allies were no longer needed, and it was increasingly expensive to maintain a nation-to-nation

relationship. Treaty obligations began to hinder western expansion.

This created a political quandary that was known as the “Indian Question.” Just what should be done with the former allies? A British theorist came up with four options:

- **Enslavement of all Indigenous peoples** – However, slavery was becoming illegal in the British Empire.
- **Extermination** – Commit genocide to eliminate all Indigenous peoples.
- **Isolation** – Remove all Indigenous peoples away from the general society. This was the rationale behind the expansion of the reserve system.
- **Amalgamation** – Force assimilation upon all Indigenous peoples. This was the rationale behind the Indian residential and industrial schools.

Since the 1970s, in response to the failed white paper proposal, Indian leaders have been more vocal about recovering the nation-to-nation relations, respecting treaty obligations and considering Indigenous nation as sovereign, and removing the social stigma of Indigenous peoples being considered wards of the government.



*"Interior of the House of Commons, Session 1897" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

## Is it federal reserves or sovereign territory?

**"Reserves are held by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart, and subject to this Act and to the terms of any treaty or surrender, the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which lands in a reserve are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band."**

Indian Act

We still occupy parts of our traditional lands or lands that were reserved for us by treaty or tradition.

We have a deep spiritual connection to this land, and we maintain our relationship to the land through ceremony, customary practices and a tradition of gratitude.

We have retained the right to hunt, fish, trap and gather within our ancestral lands. There are jurisdictional conflicts over our customary practices of gaining sustenance from our lands.



*"Joseph Brant" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

**"It is very hard when we have let the King's subjects have so much of our lands for so little value, they should want to cheat us... of the small spots we have left for our women and children to live on. We are tired out in making complaints and getting no redress."**

Joseph Brant, Mohawk leader, 1790.

**"We want to put behind us the requirement for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to claim their rights and then prove their rights in court. We want to replace the policies, attitudes, and language of the past with a legal and policy framework based on the recognition of Indigenous rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership."**

Carolyn Bennett, Federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, 2018.

## Why is it Land Rights, not Land Claims?

In 1927, the federal government forbid the raising of any money to fund land claim without their consent. The Government of Canada started recognizing Indigenous land claims in 1973. Federal policy divided the claims in two categories: comprehensive claims and specific claims. Comprehensive claims deal with Indigenous rights of Métis, First Nations and Inuit communities that did not sign treaties with the Government of Canada. Specific claims, on the other hand, are filed by First Nations communities over Canada's breach of the Numbered Treaties, the Indian Act or any other agreement between the Crown and First Nations.

Comprehensive claims are assertions of Aboriginal title by Indigenous groups over their ancestral lands. Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements, also called modern treaties, first started being negotiated by the federal government in 1973 to gain the consent from Indigenous peoples for Canada to assert sovereignty over their unceded land.

Specific claims are claims made by Indigenous communities related to the administration of land and other First Nations assets by the Government of Canada, or breaches of treaty obligations or of any other agreements between First Nations and the Crown by the Government of Canada. They can also involve mismanagement of Indigenous land or assets by the Crown under the Indian Act.

We are not making a claim that we should have access to our ancestral lands. Canada and Ontario have claimed possession of our lands.

What we seek is an ongoing relation to those lands, the natural bounty of those lands, and to derive a reasonable income from those lands.

The federal government requires us to sign away our Aboriginal right to any lands that are subject to a federal land claims process. The courts have a checkered record in recognizing and protecting our rights.

There are about 30 ongoing land rights cases in Ontario. (See [Current Land Claims](#).) None of these cases deals with the land upon which Mohawk College rests.

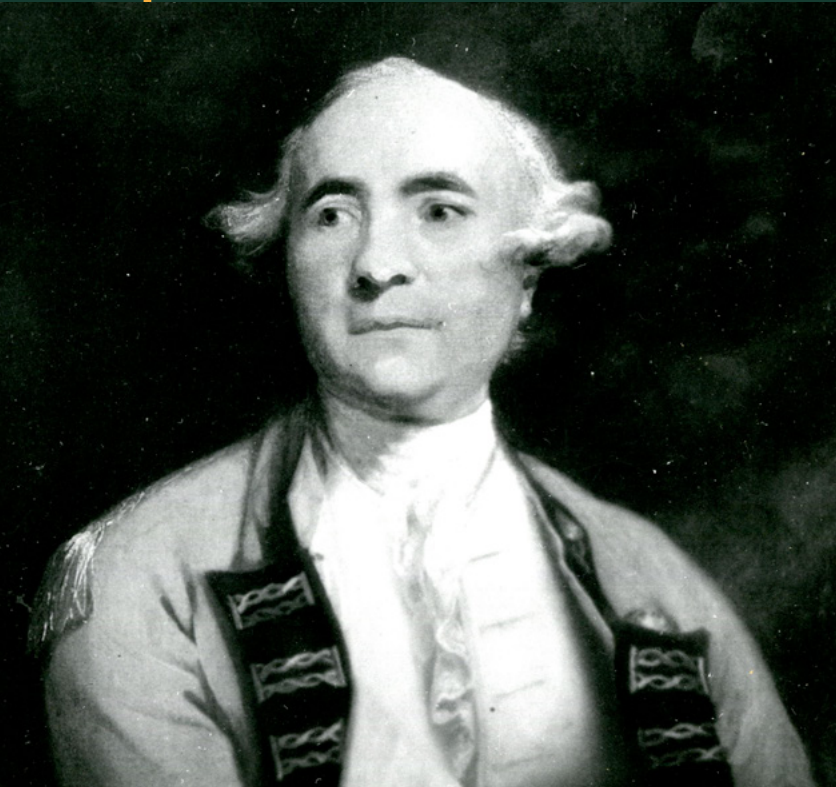
## Land rights facts

- 22 cases have been resolved since 2007.
- 19,522 hectares of Crown land have been transferred from Ontario to Canada for the use and benefit of Indigenous nations.
- \$130 million has been paid in compensation.
- Claims have taken from 5 to 145 years to settle.



*"Hwy 60, Algonquin Park" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

# What is the situation with the Haldimand Tract land rights?



*"Sir Frederick Haldimand"  
courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

Sir Frederick Haldimand issued a Proclamation that stated in part that the Six Nations were "to take possession of and settle upon the banks of the river commonly called Ouse or Grand River, running into Lake Erie, allotting to them for that Purpose six miles deep from each side of the River beginning at Lake Erie, and extending in that Proportion to the Head of the said River." Disputes immediately developed over what actual lands were included in this grant. Another nagging question was who actually owned this land?

Was the title simply transferred to the Six Nations, or, did the Crown still retain the title?

The Simcoe Patent was issued on January 14, 1795 to try and resolve these questions. By this patent, the British government intended to establish with greater certainty the location of the boundaries of the Grand River tract and to define the nature of the Six Nations interest in it: "We being desirous of showing our approbation of the same and in recompense of the losses they may have sustained of providing a convenient Tract of Land under our protection for a safe and comfortable Retreat for them and their posterity."

However, the Chiefs at Grand River objected to this and never accepted it because the survey cut off one-third of the lands (approximately 275,000 acres) pledged by the original proclamation. The British government stated that they had not acquired those lands at the headwaters of the Grand River, so they could not grant rights to those lands.

The Court of Appeal examined the Simcoe Patent and concluded that it was not a grant of land in fee simple, and therefore the land was held by the Crown for the benefit of the Six Nations Indian Band. Confederacy Chiefs believed they owned the fee simple title to the land and could do with it as they pleased with the Crown's consent, and there has been controversy over the land ever since. (See [Who Rules the Valley of the Six Nations](#) for more information.)



# Haldimand Tract timeline

**Oct. 25, 1784**

British Governor Frederick Haldimand grants land to Mohawks and Six Nations to compensate for land lost as British allies. The tract covered six miles (9.6 kilometres) on each side of the Grand River from Lake Erie to the river's source, about 950,000 acres (about 384,500 hectares).

**Jan. 14, 1793**

Simcoe Patent confirms Haldimand land deed but reduces the size of the original grant by 25%. Six Nations Chiefs protested the move. The Crown did not give the Six Nations all the land promised in the Haldimand Proclamation. Crown patented land in the tract known as "Block 5" (part of Moulton Township) and "Block 6" (part of Canborough Township) without having received a valid surrender.

**1829**

Flooding of Six Nations land begins for the Welland Canal. Other landowners were compensated, but not the Indians.

**Oct. 20, 1829**

Investigation launched into disposal of Six Nations land by William Claus, deputy superintendent-general of Indian affairs. Claus sends money from the sale of the land to his son in Philadelphia. The government subsequently loses litigation over Claus family land in Canada and takes the cost out of the Six Nations fund. The Six Nations Chiefs ended up paying three times for the land and never received it.

**1841**

In a much disputed transaction, a small number of Chiefs surrendered the majority of the remaining Haldimand Tract. The Council of Chiefs objected but their protests were ignored.

**1847**

Six Nations chiefs agree to have band funds transferred back to Upper Canada from England. Some of the money is put into an Indian trust account; the rest goes into the federal government's general fund.

**1848**

The Executive Council of Canada calls for legal action to recover more than 6,000 pounds misappropriated by Samuel P. Jarvis, chief superintendent of Indian affairs, from the Six Nations account. Jarvis dies in 1857 and no action is ever brought against him or his estate.

The Crown speculatively invested the Six Nations' trust monies in the Grand River Navigation Company; Six Nations did not receive appropriate compensation for 368 7/10 acres patented to the Grand River Navigation Company.

# Haldimand Tract timeline (continued)

**March 29, 1867**

The British North America Act specifies that the new Canadian government is responsible for Indians, their land and money.

**Sept. 17, 1924**

Ottawa orders Six Nations Confederacy chiefs to be replaced by elected chiefs. It causes a significant portion of the reserve population to boycott the elective system. This continues today.

**Dec. 23, 1994**

Six Nations launches court action. Canada receives an extension until December 1995, to file a defense. The Government of Canada's position is that the Six Nations validly surrendered all the lands that are not now part of the reserve; that the Six Nations received full and fair compensation for the lands they surrendered; and, that if there is any liability, the liability related to breaches that pre-date Confederation rests with the Province of Ontario.

**1884**

The superintendent-general of Indian affairs recommends payment of 28,000 pounds to Six Nations as compensation for land flooded by the Welland Canal. Canada and Ontario fight over who should pay. Arbitration finds Canada responsible, but payment is never received.

**Jan. 21, 1982**

First specific claim filed with Canada. A total of 25 separate claims—each dealing with different issues—have been filed. It is accepted for negotiation. Other claims are subsequently filed, but negotiations fail.

**1999-2001**

All three Parties—the Six Nations, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada—turned from active litigation and towards talks to find common ground upon which to proceed with some form of out-of-court resolution.

Since 2004, the Government of Canada has been in exploratory discussions with the Six Nations' elected Chief and Council and the Province of Ontario to address the claims.

On February 28, 2006, members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community reclaimed a tract of land near Caledonia, Ontario. This property had been illegally sold by the province to the Henco Corporation for the purpose of building a residential complex.

On June 16, 2006, the Ontario government bought out the Douglas Estates developers and offered a substantial amount of money to Caledonia-area businesses that had alleged they'd been negatively impacted by the road barricades.

On April 20, 2006, the OPP attacked the camp, armed with tasers, pepper spray and automatic weapons. Many people were injured and a few were arrested. Astonishingly, the community was able to peacefully re-establish the camp, renaming the site Kanenhsatón (the Protected Place).



**“As we mark 150 years of Confederation, it is time to ask what we want the next 150 years to look like and the role First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation will have in building a stronger and more inclusive Canada. These Principles affirm recognition of Indigenous peoples and their rights as the necessary starting point for the Crown to engage in partnership with Indigenous peoples to develop new Indigenous–Crown relations, and as the foundation for transforming laws, policies and operational practices.”**

Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 2017.

*Left: “Jody Wilson-Raybould” by Erich Saide is licensed under ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.*

## Are we all treaty people?

Not all of Canada is covered by a specific parchment or paper treaty—an international agreement between the Crown and the Indigenous leaders.

A treaty is more than the written document; it is an ongoing relationship, recognition of our customary practices, protection of our right to live in our territories undisturbed, and a mechanism to resolve difference through peaceful negotiations.

Before Canada became a country, its lands were under the jurisdiction of France and England. The crown heads of those countries made treaties with Indian Nations. There were many such

treaties, treaty councils and court decisions that affected Crown–Indigenous relations and Indigenous land tenure. There were at least 24 major treaties signed, mostly covering lands along the north shore of Lake Ontario.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the British government changed its policy and viewed the Indigenous peoples of Canada as their wards, not their allies. In the 1870s, administration of Indian Affairs was transferred from England to the Government of Canada, which did not consider Indigenous people to be citizens at that time. The Indian Act was adopted as the primary legal tool to assume authority over Indigenous lives.

**“While the Numbered Treaties are still viewed as cession documents by the federal and provincial governments, Indigenous intellectuals take a different (and nearly unanimous) view that these agreements established an enduring relationship that recognizes Indigenous rights and title, rather than extinguishing them. As Canadians are beginning to think more critically of these agreements, developing a better framework from which to approach Indigenous–Canada and Indigenous–Crown relations is paramount.”**

Adam Gaudry, Métis scholar, 2017.

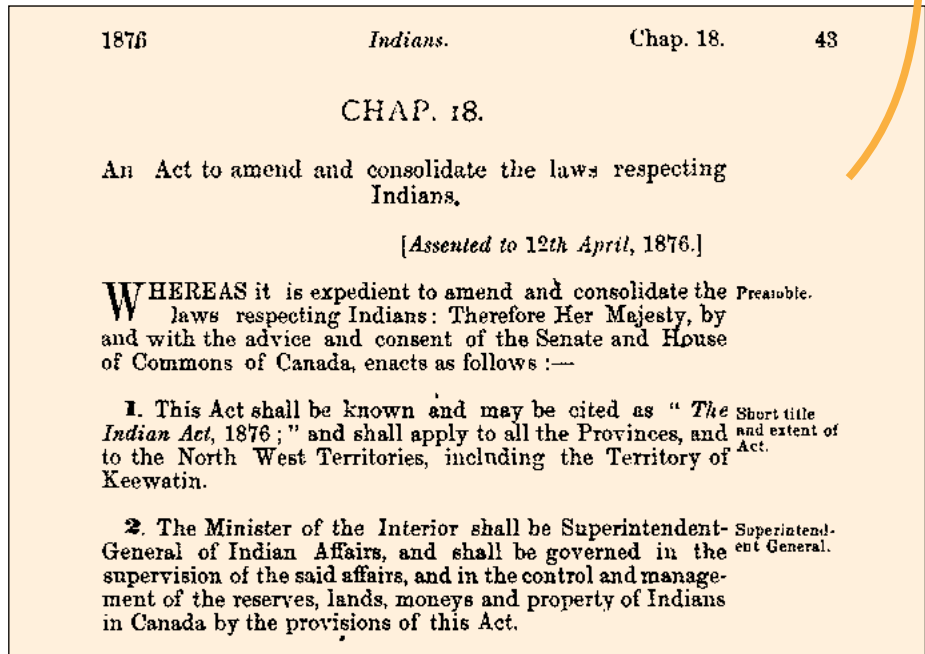
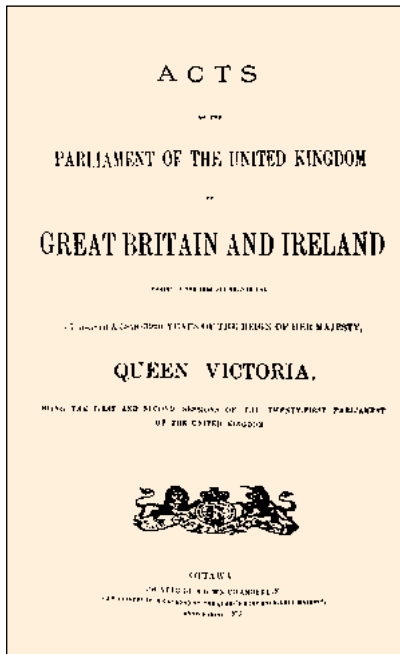
## What are Numbered Treaties?

From 1871 to 1921, a series of numbered treaties were signed to create reserves in western provinces.

Numbered Treaties 1-11 created “Indian reserves” defined as “parcels of land held in trust by the Crown, for the use and benefit of the Indian Nations to hunt, fish, and farm.” Originally, reserves were established to “keep traders and whiskey peddlers away from Aboriginal Indians.”

<b>#1</b>	<b>1871</b>	41,750 square kilometres of Chipewyan and Swampy Cree land in Manitoba
<b>#2</b>	<b>1871</b>	89,250 square kilometres of Chipewyan land north and west of Manitoba
<b>#3</b>	<b>1873</b>	Lake of the Woods passage through Saulteaux territory (Ontario–Manitoba)
<b>#4</b>	<b>1874</b>	194,000 square kilometres of the Cree and Saulteaux lands in Saskatchewan
<b>#5</b>	<b>1875</b>	260,000 square kilometres of the Cree and Saulteaux lands at the Lake Winnipeg Treaty, Winnipeg–Manitoba
<b>#6</b>	<b>1876</b>	310,000 square kilometres of the Cree and Assiniboine lands in Alberta
<b>#7</b>	<b>1877</b>	Blackfoot, Blood, Peigan, Sarcee and Stony lands in Alberta
<b>#8</b>	<b>1899</b>	812,000 square kilometres of land in northern Alberta to create a safe passaway for goldminers
<b>#9</b>	<b>1905</b>	550,000 square kilometres of Objivay and Cree lands in the northern section of all provinces
<b>#10</b>	<b>1906</b>	Chippewyan and Cree lands in northern Saskatchewan
<b>#11</b>	<b>1921</b>	930,000 square kilometres of Slave, Dogrib, Hare and Loucheaux lands in the Northwest Territories.

# The Indian Act



Courtesy [Canadiana](#).

**“The Indian Act was passed with the intention of implementing the terms of the treaties and of establishing the status of Indians. It was made from the main body of law from which the legal rights of Indians flow. This was one of the first major steps taken by the government of Canada to weaken the treaties signed with our people, for now it is from the Indian Act that the legal position of the Indian primarily stems, rather from the treaties themselves.”**

Harold Cardinal, Cree Scholar, 1969: 43–44.

**“When we talk about treaty, for example, from a Cree perspective, we are talking about a fundamental Cree doctrine of law called Wa-koo-towin, the laws governing relationships. These laws establish the principles that govern the conduct and behaviour of individuals within their family environment, within their communities, and with others outside their communities. Wa-koo-towin provided the framework within which the treaty relationships with the Europeans were to function.”**

Harold Cardinal, Cree Scholar, 1969: 74–75.

CARDINAL, HAROLD. THE UNJUST SOCIETY: THE TRAGEDY OF CANADA'S INDIANS. MG HURTIG, 1969.

1. The term "band" means any tribe, band or body of Indians who own or are interested in a reserve or in Indian lands in common, of which the legal title is vested in the Crown, or who share alike in the distribution of any annuities or interest moneys for which the Government of Canada is responsible; the term "the band" means the band to which the context relates; and the term "band," when action is being taken by the band as such, means the band in council.

2. The term "irregular band" means any tribe, band or body of persons of Indian blood who own no interest in any reserve or lands of which the legal title is vested in the Crown, who possess no common fund managed by the Government of Canada, or who have not had any treaty relations with the Crown.

3. The term "Indian" means Indians.

*First.* Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band;

*Secondly.*

88. Every such Indian shall, before the issue of the letters patent mentioned in the next preceding section, declare to the Superintendent-General the name and surname by which he or she wishes to be enfranchised and thereafter known, and on his or her receiving such letters patent, in such name and surname, he or she shall be held to be also enfranchised, and he or she shall thereafter be known by such name or surname, and if such Indian be a married man his wife and minor unmarried children also shall be held to be enfranchised; and from the date of such letters patent the provisions of this Act and of any Act or law making any distinction between the legal rights, privileges, disabilities and liabilities of Indians and those of Her Majesty's other subjects shall cease to apply to any Indian, or to the wife or minor unmarried children of any Indian as aforesaid, so declared to be enfranchised, who shall no longer be deemed Indians within the meaning of the laws relating to Indians, except in so far as their right to participate in the annuities and interest moneys, and rents and councils of the band of Indians

# Indian Act facts

Did you know that the Indian Act...

- denied women status
- introduced residential schools
- created reserves
- renamed individuals with European names
- restricted Indigenous peoples from leaving a reserve without permission from an Indian Agent
- enforced enfranchisement of any Indigenous peoples admitted to university or clergy
- could expropriate portions of reserves for roads, railways and other public works, as well as to move an entire reserve away from a municipality if it was deemed expedient
- could lease out uncultivated reserve lands to non-Indigenous peoples if the new leaseholder would use it for farming or pasture
- forbade Indigenous peoples from forming political organizations
- prohibited anyone from soliciting funds for Indigenous peoples' legal claims without special licence from the Superintendent General
- prohibited the sale of alcohol to Indigenous peoples
- prohibited sale of ammunition to Indigenous peoples
- prohibited pool hall owners from allowing First Nations entrance
- imposed the "band council" system
- forbade Indigenous peoples from speaking their native language
- forbade Indigenous peoples from practicing their traditional religion
- forbade western Indigenous peoples from appearing in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant wearing traditional regalia
- declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal
- denied Indigenous peoples the right to vote
- created a permit system to control Indigenous peoples' ability to sell products from farms
- is a piece of legislation created under the British rule for the purpose of subjugating one race

(BOB JOSEPH, 21 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE INDIAN ACT)

# What was the Mohawk Institute?

**“We had no mentors, no adult protectors. We saw kids desperate for affection who willingly allowed themselves to be molested. We learned to position our bodies in places where the older boys could not attack. We learned quickly that the threat of violence and the resulting fear was the most effective way of controlling others.”**

Doug George, Akwesasne Mohawk, Mush Hole Survivor (1967–68)

**“I did not understand that the little broken child in me was left at the “Mush Hole” and through my own healing journey and the wonderful people I have met along the way helped me to bring that child out of the “Mush Hole” and bring her home. I still feel scarred and damaged but the burden of guilt and shame is not mine to carry anymore.”**

Roberta Hill, Mush Hole Survivor (1958–64)

Canada’s oldest Indian residential school began as a Mechanic’s Institute in 1828. It became a residential school operated by the New England Company on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospels in Foreign Parts, a Church of England missionary society.

It was later operated by the Anglican Church with financial and administrative support from the Government of Canada, which took full control of the school in 1965.

Known as the Mush Hole because of serving mush three times a day, the school closed in 1970. As a result of a lawsuit by Mush Hole Survivors and their testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we have learned of decades of mental, physical and sexual abuse that took place there.

**Every family at Six Nations has been affected by the legacy of what took place there and the resulting social dysfunctions from the traumatic experiences of the students who spent time there.**



*“Mohawk Institute – 1932”  
courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

# What was the “Sixties Scoop”?

**“Any trauma that detaches children from their families, communities and cultures increases the likelihood of involvement in commercial sexual exploitation. Once a child or youth loses such basic parameters as safety, shelter and sustenance, their vulnerability forces them into situations whereby the sex trade can become the only viable alternative for survival.”**

Save the Children Canada. Sacred Lives: Canadian Aboriginal Children and Youth Speak Out About Sexual Exploitation. National Aboriginal Consultation Project. Ottawa, 2000.

Because we were considered wards of the government and there was a jurisdictional vacuum between the federal and provincial governments, thousands of Indigenous children were forcefully taken from the homes and placed up for adoption by non-Indigenous families.

Richard Cardinal, a Métis child born in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, entered the foster care system when he was four years old, and suffered through 28 group care and foster placements, secured facilities and shelters. At age 17, Richard hanged himself, on June 26, 1984.

The Sixties Scoop is the catch-all name for a series of policies enacted by provincial child welfare authorities starting in the mid-1950s, which saw thousands of Indigenous children taken from their homes and families, placed in foster homes and eventually adopted out to white families from across Canada and the United States. These children lost their names, their languages and a connection to their heritage. Sadly, many were also abused and made to feel ashamed of who they were.

The movement of taking Indigenous children for adoption began in 1965 and continued into the 1980s. After reviewing every case in 1985, Justice Edwin Kimelman concluded that the process was “cultural genocide” that was “taking place in a systematic, routine manner” with “an abysmal lack of sensitivity to children and families.”

Provincial child welfare agencies continued this child kidnapping and today there are more children in care than ever went to the Indian residential schools in any single year.

Many of the children who were adopted out suffered emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical harm, compounding the negative legacy for the residential school experiences of their older relatives.



The Indian Act required that any Indigenous women who married a non-Indigenous man would lose her status as a registered “Indian,” and her children from that marriage would also not be registered as “Indians.” This created a category called Non-Status Indians.

In 2009, Beaverhouse First Nation Chief Marcia Brown Martel filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of the stolen children. In February 2017, an Ontario judge presiding over the class action suit ruled that the federal government failed in its “duty of care” for the 16,000 Indigenous Ontarians who were separated from their families.

A 2011 Statistics Canada study found 14,225 or 3.6 per cent of all First Nations children aged 14 and under are in foster care, compared with 15,345 or 0.3 per cent of non-Indigenous children.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Edward Belobaba ruled on February 14, 2017 in favour of the plaintiffs, and stated that the government was liable for the harm caused by the Sixties Scoop. A \$800 million settlement was announced for Status Indians who were adopted out, who were eligible for \$25,000 to \$50,000 in compensation. Non-status and Métis will not receive compensation under the settlement, despite the fact that Adopt Indian Métis (AIM) project also began in 1967.

By 2019, 34,768 claims were submitted by Indigenous adults who were taken in their youth. Only 14,059 of those claims were approved. 9,908 are still being assessed.

In 2000, a joint study by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Assembly of First Nations found that child services on reserves received on average 22% less funding per child than provincially funded counterparts that serve predominantly non-Indigenous families.

In 2018, Métis and non-status First Nations launched a suit seeking damages for the alleged harms inflicted on them by the Canadian government during the Sixties Scoop.

## What is the Ipperwash Report?

“The immediate catalyst for most major occupations and protests is a dispute over a land claim, a burial site, resource development, or harvesting, hunting and fishing rights. The fundamental conflict, however, is usually about land.”  
*Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry*

The Ipperwash Inquiry looked into the events surrounding the death of Anthony O’Brien (Dudley) George, who was shot and killed by an Ontario Provincial Police officer during a protest by First Nations representatives at Ipperwash Provincial Park in 1995.

The Ipperwash Inquiry Report produced 20 recommendations that included: “Policing strategies should ensure that they address the uniqueness of Aboriginal occupations and protests, with particular emphasis on the historical, legal, and behavioral differences of such incidents. Training should focus on the requirements for peacekeeping, communication, negotiation and building trust before, during and after such incident.”

The report called upon the OPP to issue an apology to Cecil Bernard George for violence he suffered while detained, and stated that the federal government should apologize to Kettle and Stony Point First Nation for failing to settle the 60+ year matter.

# Truth and reconciliation

## Why was there a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

When Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered his historic apology in 2008 for Indian residential schools, an Environics benchmark survey found that only half of Canadians had read or heard something about the schools. Nevertheless, the survey found that two-thirds of Canadians believed (and four in 10 strongly believed) that they had a role to play in reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, even if they had no direct experience in Indian residential schools themselves.

The survey also found that “Canadians generally understand the word “reconciliation” to mean closure/forgiveness or “moving on,” awareness/understanding of the issue, improving relations between Aboriginal people and other Canadians, or making amends/apologizing.” (Environics, 2008, p. ii).

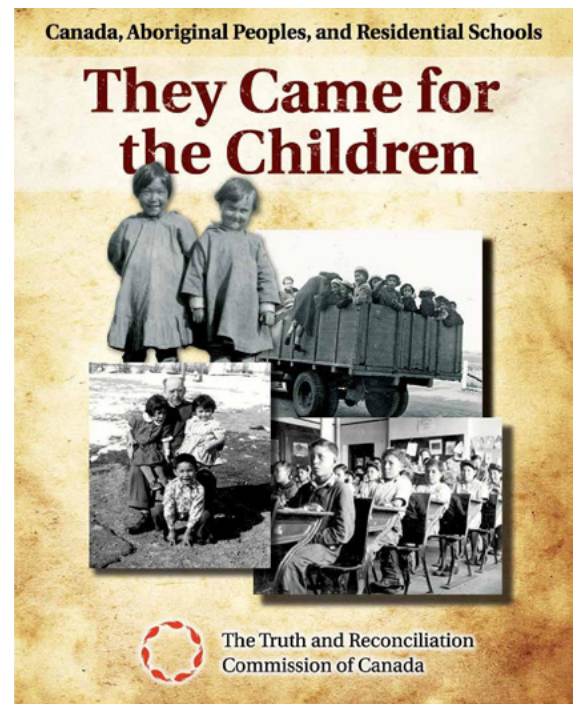
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was launched in 2008 to provide those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian residential schools system with an opportunity for 7,000 survivors to share their stories and experiences. The last such school closed in 1996. The TRC was part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement produced by the federal government, churches and Indigenous communities.

The commission lasted 5 years, cost \$60 million and produced 94 Calls to Action. The commission also oversaw the disbursement of two funding packages, totaling \$20 million, for commemoration activities across the country. TRC was also meant to lay the foundation for lasting reconciliation across Canada.

The federal government indemnified the churches that operated the schools, and those survivors who received a financial settlement for the physical and sexual abuse they suffered had to agree to not prosecute the perpetrators nor sue the churches involved.

# TRC facts

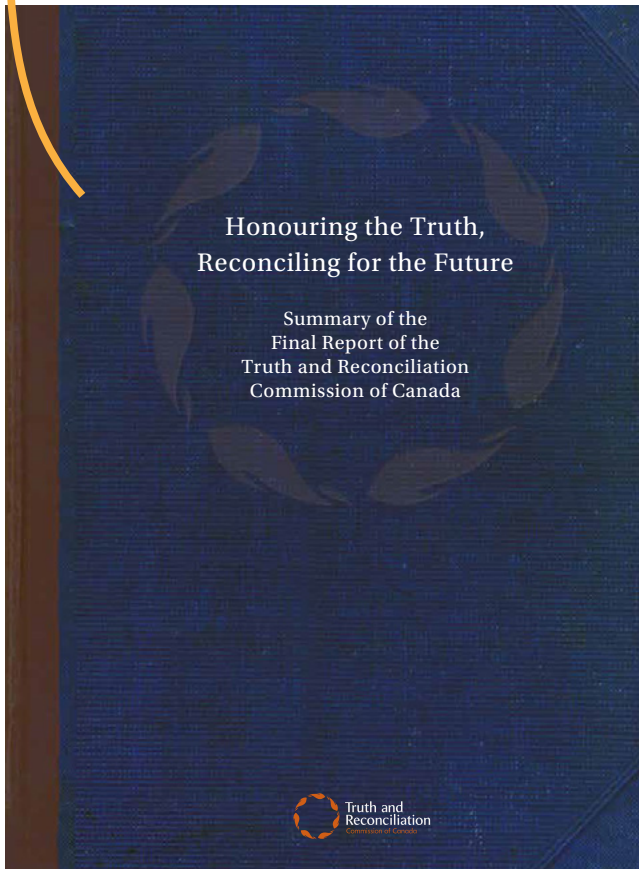
- Approximately 150,000 students attended 150 schools.
- The process has been labelled a form of cultural genocide
- About 3,200 students died while at these schools, mostly due to malnourishment or disease.
- Calls to Action 6 to 12 deal with education to eliminate the educational and employment gaps; provide parity in educational funding for on-reserve schools; develop culturally appropriate educational programs.
- Language and Culture Calls to Action 13 to 17 recognize Indigenous language rights and provide funding to support language retention.
- **Education for Reconciliation** – We call upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples and educators to:
  - Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
  - Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
  - Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
  - Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.



*"They Came for the Children" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

- Develop and implement Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- Share information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- Build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- Identify teacher-training needs relating to the above.
- We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre of Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

# TRC Calls To Action highlights



*"TRC Canada Executive Summary" courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

## **Child welfare**

Commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care.

## **Education**

Develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate education and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

- a. Improve education attainment levels and success rates.
- b. Develop culturally appropriate curricula.
- c. Respect and honour treaty relationships.
- d. Increase funding to end backlog of students seeking postsecondary programs.

## **Language and culture**

Acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights; the federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal language revitalization and preservation.

## **Health**

Acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law and under the treaties.

- a. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health care field.
- b. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- c. Provide cultural competency training for all health care professionals.

## **Justice**

Ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

## **Reconciliation**

Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation; AND develop a national action plan, strategies and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the Declaration.

# TRC Calls To Action (continued)

## **Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation**

Jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown.

## **Settlement agreement parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Encourage church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.

## **Equity for Aboriginal people in the legal system**

Collaborate with Aboriginal organizations to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use and understanding of Indigenous law and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

## **National Council for Reconciliation**

In consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members.

## **Professional development and training for public servants**

Provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and

legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.

## **Church apologies and reconciliation**

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families and their communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse, to occur within one year of the issuance of this Report, and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

## **Youth programs**

Establish multi-year funding of community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

## **Museums and archives**

Provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.

## **Missing children and burial information**

We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

# TRC Calls To Action (continued)

## National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

## Commemoration

In collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.

## Media and reconciliation

Restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada's national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.

## Sports reconciliation

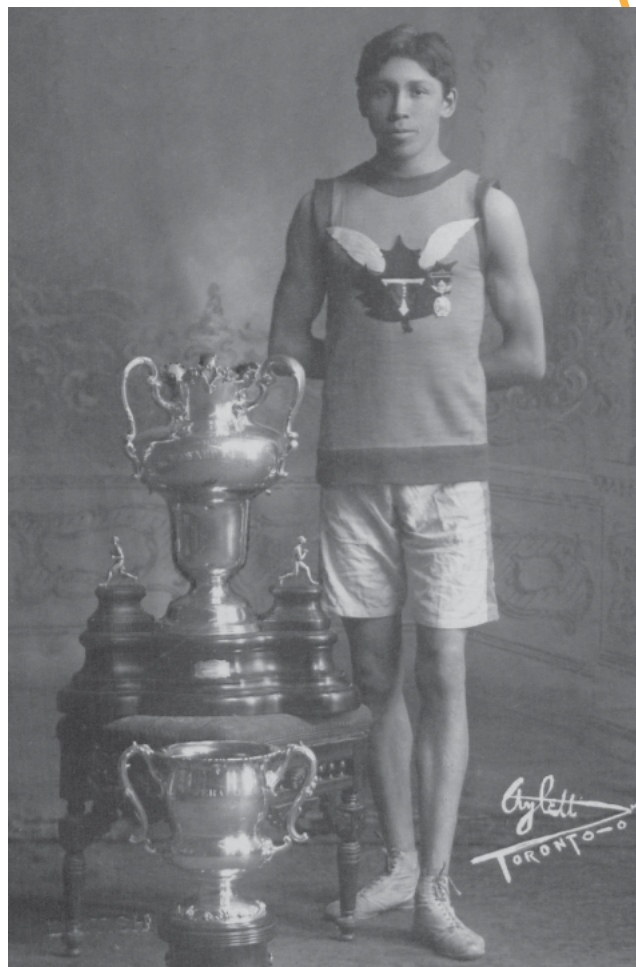
In collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

## Business and reconciliation

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.

## Newcomers to Canada –

In collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the treaties and history of residential schools.



*"Thomas Charles Longboat"* (Iroquois name: Cogwagee) was an Onondaga distance runner from the Six Nations Reserve. *Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*



Tanya Tagaq – Inuk throat singer from Cambridge Bay (Iqaluktuuttiaq), Nunavut. *"Tanya Tagaq"* by *Michael Hoefner* is licensed under *ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.*

# Healthcare, justice and rights of Indigenous peoples

**“Jordan’s death ignited a movement to uphold human rights for all First Nations children through the creation of the child-first principle called ‘Jordan’s Principle.’”**

Caring Society, 2011.

## What is Jordan’s Principle?

Jordan’s Principle is named in honour of Jordan River Anderson, a young Indigenous boy from Norway House Cree Nation, Manitoba, who spent his entire life in hospital while caught in a jurisdictional dispute between the governments of Canada and Manitoba, which both refused to pay for the in-home medical care necessary for Jordan to live in his home and community. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in his family home.

Jordan’s Principle aims to make sure Indigenous children can access all public services in a way that is reflective of their distinct cultural needs, takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization, and without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions because they are Indigenous.

In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) determined the Government of Canada’s approach to services for Indigenous children was discriminatory, and ordered the federal government to immediately stop applying a limited and discriminatory definition of Jordan’s Principle and to immediately take measures to implement the full meaning and scope of the principle.

In 2017, the CHRT found that the federal government continued “its pattern of conduct and narrow focus with respect to Jordan’s Principle,” resulting in unnecessary and unlawful bureaucratic delays, gaps and denial of essential public services to Indigenous children, and ordered that the needs of each individual child must be considered to ensure the following is taken into account under Jordan’s Principle:

- substantive equality of services provided;
- culturally appropriate services;
- safeguarding the best interest of the child.



*Walking With Our Sisters Exhibition by Archkris is licensed under Sharealike 4.0 International License.*

**“It seems that being an Indigenous woman means that you’re at high risk. To me it’s about training, it’s about educating the frontline of policing and understanding domestic violence, understanding sexual violence, understanding the history and impacts of colonization on Indigenous people – and even the role of policing to Indigenous people, because there’s not a lot of trust there.”**

Bev Jacobs, Mohawk Institute alum and lead research of “No More Stolen Sisters” report by Amnesty International, 2015.

**“I don’t get the sense the general public cares much about missing or murdered Aboriginal women. It’s all part of this indifference to the lives of Aboriginal people. They don’t seem to matter as much as white people.”**

Warren Goulding, journalist, 1996.

## What happened to Indigenous Women and Girls?

In 1991, a Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba: The Deaths of Helen Betty Osborne and John Joseph Harper tells that Helen Betty Osborne was a 19-year-old Cree student from northern Manitoba who dreamed of becoming a teacher. On November 12, 1971, she was abducted by four white men in the town of The Pas and then sexually assaulted and brutally killed. A provincial inquiry subsequently concluded that Canadian authorities had failed Helen Betty Osborne. The inquiry criticized the sloppy and racially biased police investigation that took more than 15 years to bring one of the four men to justice. Most disturbingly, the inquiry concluded that police had long been aware of white men sexually preying on Indigenous women and girls in The Pas but “did not feel that the practice necessitated any particular vigilance.”

The inquiry concluded: “Her attackers seemed to be operating on the assumption that Aboriginal women were promiscuous and open to enticement through alcohol or violence.



It is evident that the men who abducted Osborne believed that young Aboriginal women were objects with no human value beyond sexual gratification.”

In 1996, a report by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs revealed that Indigenous women between the ages of 25 and 44, with status under the Indian Act, were five times more likely than all other women of the same age to die as the result of violence.

In 2004, *STOLEN SISTERS: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada* by Amnesty International, documented some of the underlying causes of violence against Indigenous women carried out by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. As the report showed, widespread and entrenched racism, poverty and marginalization are critical factors exposing Indigenous women to a heightened risk of violence while denying them adequate protection by police and government services.

### **No More Stolen Sisters – the need for a comprehensive response to discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Canada**

In 2015, a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls produced a final report, “Reclaiming Power and Place” in 2019. The inquiry interviewed 2,389 families and issued 231 Calls for Justice. The report sought to identify root causes for disproportionate levels of violence and sexual assaults and what can be done to reduce such risks.

## **Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) facts**

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada have been the targets of violence for far too long.
- This violence amounts to a race-based genocide of Indigenous peoples.
- Colonial violence, as well as racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people, has become embedded in everyday life—whether this is through interpersonal forms of violence, through institutions like the health care system and the justice system, or in the laws, policies and structures of Canadian society.
- Words, actions and behaviours that condone violence tell us something about the attitudes and values that shape relationships. To make lasting change to these relationships requires confronting the underlying or systemic beliefs that allow violence to happen.
- Indigenous laws and values can create healing encounters so women can retire their power and place, and as a foundation for decolonizing the systems that have oppressed women in the past.

**“We’re talking about so many layers of violence, so many generations of loss, and it’s all covered up in layers of silence... In order for us to move ahead, we have to deal with all the things people don’t want to talk about. We need to learn from the lives that have been lost. We need to turn things around.”**

Beverley Jacobs, President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada, August 2009.

# What is UNDRIP?

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007 by a majority of 144 states in favour, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States) and 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine).

Years later the four countries that voted against have reversed their position and now support the UN Declaration. Today the Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples.

The Declaration addresses both individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, language, and others. The text says Indigenous peoples have the right to fully enjoy, as a collective or as individuals, all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rest of international human rights law. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By that right they can freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. They

## Some highlights of the Declaration

- Seventeen of the 45 articles of the Declaration deal with Indigenous culture and how to protect and promote it, by respecting the direct input of Indigenous peoples in decision-making and allowing for resources, such as those for education in Indigenous languages and other areas.
- Fifteen of the 46 articles of the Declaration are about Indigenous peoples' participation in all decisions that will affect their lives, including meaningful participation in a democratic polity.
- The Declaration confirms the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and recognizes subsistence rights and rights to lands, territories and resources.
- The Declaration recognizes that Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.
- Essentially, the Declaration outlaws discrimination against Indigenous peoples, and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them, as well as their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development.

have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they choose to, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state.

# Stereotypes and myths

**“Repeated assaults on the culture and collective identity of Aboriginal people have weakened the foundations of Aboriginal society and contributed to the alienation that drives some to self-destruction and anti-social behaviour. Social problems among Aboriginal people are, in large measure, a legacy of history.”**

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Rcap), 1996.

**“The portrayal of the squaw is one of the most degraded, most despised and most dehumanized anywhere in the world... she has no human face, she is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty. Such a grotesque dehumanization has rendered all Native women and girls vulnerable to gross physical, psychological and sexual violence.”**

Emma LaRoque, Department of Native Studies,  
University of Manitoba, Manitoba Justice Inquiry.

For over a hundred years, Westerns and documentaries have shaped the public’s perception of Native people. The wise elder (*Little Big Man*); the drunk (*Tom Sawyer*); the Indian princess (*Pocahontas*); the loyal sidekick (*Tonto*)—these images have become engrained in the consciousness of every North American.

Stereotypes do great harm. Whether you are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, you will often hear negative stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, but you might not always have enough information to see past the stereotypes and see past the racism to find the truth.

The Canadian school system has contributed to these stereotypes, as very little is taught about Indigenous peoples and their real history.

Canadian popular culture, literature, art, entertainment and children’s toys still perpetuate negative cultural and racial stereotypes.



*“Wooden Indian from tobacco shop”  
courtesy Wikimedia Commons.*

Many families shared racist ideas towards people of colour including Indigenous peoples.

As a result some persistent stereotypes inhibit constructive relationships and perpetuate negative personal attitudes and beliefs toward Indigenous peoples.

If we can change the nature of the conversation around the dinner table and office cooler we can begin to dismantle the persistent stereotypes, replacing them with more accurate information and understanding.

**The Indian Princess** – Native beauty who is sympathetic enough to the white man’s quest to be lured away from her group to marry into his culture and further his mission to civilize her people.

**The Native Warrior** – One of the most widely used stereotypes in cinematographic history, the Native Warrior is fierce and formidable and a threat to civilized society. Bare-chested and brandishing a war lance, this warrior is the epitome of the savagery that must be courageously overcome by “progressive elements” pushing West.

**The Noble Savage** – In an effort to redress past wrongs, there has been an increase in another time-honoured romantic stereotype—the mythic Noble Savage. Elevated to a sphere of goodness

unreachable by those in contaminated White society and usually possessing some spiritual connection to the land, the Noble Savage communes in a cloud of mysticism and places no value on material possessions.

Such images are often historically and culturally inaccurate. Some of the images are simplistic characterization. Sometimes the stereotyping comes from omission, as if Indigenous peoples are no longer here.

Many Indigenous people experience stereotype microaggressions on a regular basis. These are often statements that:

- repeat or affirm stereotypes about Indigenous peoples or subtly demean them
- position the dominant non-Indigenous culture as normal and the Indigenous culture as abnormal
- express disapproval of or discomfort with Indigenous peoples
- assume all Indigenous peoples are the same
- minimize the existence of discrimination against Indigenous peoples
- deny the perpetrator’s own bias toward Indigenous peoples
- minimize real conflict between the Indigenous peoples and the dominant non-Indigenous culture



Elmer Boyd Smith’s “Pocahontas” courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

# 5 things we need to stop saying about Indigenous people

By Wab Kinew, CBC Reporter

## 1. Alcohol

Poverty produces this effect, but all people have trouble with alcohol.

## 2. “Get over it”

We will not forget what has happened.

## 3. Long Hair

Some wear their long hair as a symbol of cultural pride, but many Indigenous people have curly hair.

## 4. What are you doing with the \$7 billion given by Indian Affairs?

Money pays for a population the same size as New Brunswick, which gets \$8 billion from the federal government.

## 5. Taxes

We still pay some taxes, we don’t get a free ride, we are still waiting for the treaty pledges to be fulfilled after 140 years. Who is really getting the free ride?

(Source: [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca))



*“Legoland Indianer” by Legoland Billund Resort licensed under [ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).*

Cultural appropriation is the adoption or use of culturally significant items by someone from another culture. During this process the original meaning is usually lost or distorted. Cultural appropriation is offensive when someone from a dominant culture exploits the cultural and intellectual property of a marginalized group of people, and even more so when the dominant culture has outlawed many of the cultural items that are now being marketed.

(Source: [opentextbc.ca](http://opentextbc.ca))

Indigenous people work in the media—in newspapers, radio, book publishing, film, web journalism, and television. The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is a cable television network in Canada that produces and broadcasts programs by and for Indigenous peoples. These films and TV shows can help break down some of the negative stereotypes.

# MYTHS VS FACTS



## Persistent myths about Indigenous peoples

### **Myth 1**

#### **Indigenous peoples get a “free ride”**

For the reserves that are still under the Indian Act, the federal government is responsible for providing programs and services that most non-Indigenous communities in Canada receive from provincial and municipal levels of government.

### **Myth 2**

#### **Indigenous peoples have ample reserve lands**

Reserves are only 0.2 per cent of Canada’s land mass and home to 339,595 Indigenous people (2016 Census); or, this is to say, 0.2% of Canada’s land mass houses 20% of the Indigenous population.

### **Myth 3**

#### **Indigenous peoples can do what they want with their reserve lands and resources**

Reserve lands are held by the Crown and the federal government must approve all land use and harvesting agreements.

### **Myth 4**

#### **Indigenous peoples living on reserves get free housing**

Housing can be provided based upon income and ability to repay to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The housing shortage on-reserve is in the range of 20,000 to 35,000, according to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (2011), with the shortfall growing by an estimated 2,200 units every year; of the 977,230 First Nations people who lived in Canada in 2016, about one-quarter (24.2%) lived in a dwelling in need of major repairs.

### **Myth 5**

#### **Indigenous peoples get a free secondary education**

Not all students are eligible for provincial or federal funding, and those who fail or drop out may have to pay back their grants or loans.

### **Myth 6**

#### **There is no connection between Indigenous unemployment and Indigenous health and social problems**

Low income, limited local employment opportunities, lack of proper housing, and limited access to clean water and health services creates unstable social safety nets and declining health conditions.

### **Myth 7**

#### **Indigenous peoples don't pay taxes in Canada**

Not all Indigenous people qualify for any provincial and federal tax exemptions. Status Indians, living on reserve, can be exempt from property and income tax. Most goods purchased off reserve are subject to federal taxation.

### **Myth 8**

#### **Indigenous peoples are all the same**

There is great diversity in cultures, languages, lifestyle and histories.

### **Myth 9**

#### **Residential schools are ancient history (Why don't you just get over it?)**

In 2015, Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin labelled the schools a form of "cultural genocide." This process had an extremely negative impact on the harsh, unforgiving, linguistically and culturally alien world. The punishment was often severe, and sexual, physical and psychological abuse was common. The legacy of the trauma those children suffered is carried forth through the generations.

### **Myth 10**

#### **The myth of the vanishing Indian**

The belief and hope of early Canadians was that the Indigenous people would die off or be totally assimilated. There was an assumption that their culture was backwards and would disappear as the tide of civilization advanced from coast to coast. This has not happened and we are still here.

(Source: [ictinc.ca](http://ictinc.ca))

# Constructive engagement

In 2007, Phil Fontaine, Assembly of First Nations National Chief, identified three principles that should be the grounding for corporations to engage with Indigenous communities:



*"Phil Fontaine" licensed under [ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).*

**The first principle** of collaboration with First Nations is respect for, and protection of, our cultures and values. Development which substitutes economic impoverishment for cultural impoverishment is a non-starter. It will never work because we love our cultures. They represent who we are and where we have come from. It is as simple as that.

**The second principle** is respect for our rights to our lands and resources. Our inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed in Canada's Constitution and they have been repeatedly affirmed by the Supreme Court of this land. As such, the law requires that they be respected by all governments and all companies that do business in Canada.

**The third principle** of collaboration is meaningful consultation with the local First Nations from the very beginning of a development project. We think it is presumptuous for companies to start work on development projects that may affect our very way of life, yet come to consult with us only after the project is underway.



## Congratulations for making it all the way through this publication.

As you have no doubt already realized, this is just the beginning of the next phase of your personal journey. As you move forward it might be helpful to keep in mind the Seven Sacred Teachings, and bring them to bear as you explore more ideas, build stronger relations and become a reconciliation agent for constructive change.

We thank you for taking the time to consider what we have shared. You can't do it all, but find somewhere to begin, some topic of personal interest, something that can help you with your current scope of work at Mohawk College.

It will take strength and courage to persevere on your journey. It is also important that you don't let the horror of the past imprison your heart and mind in guilt. Understand what took place and move forward with that understanding in mind. We can't change the past, but we can steer toward a more productive future.

Remember, we are here to help. In the words of our ancestors, we will join our hands together and bring our minds together as one. We can make a strong circle in which everyone matters.

