

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023-24

**Office of Indigenous Affairs  
and Reconciliation**





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister Responsible for the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (the Office), I am presenting the Annual Report for 2023-24. I am accountable for the Report and the results reported. This Report outlines the Office's activities between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024 in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the 2023-2026 Activity Plan. This Report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** under which the Office is a Category 3 entity.

This Report highlights important work completed during 2023-24, and identifies opportunities and challenges for the upcoming fiscal year. In 2023-24, the Office demonstrated its commitment to advancing Reconciliation through continued collaboration with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities and people. The Office works to build principle-based relationships grounded on the value of mutual respect. The Office will continue to strengthen our relationships based on respect, co-operation, and partnership.

I would like to thank Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people for their collaboration and work over the past year, as well as Office staff. I look forward to continued progress into 2024-25.

Sincerely,

Hon. Scott Reid  
Minister Responsible for the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation



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## Departmental Overview

### Organizational Structure

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

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation works towards advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador and has three core functions: Reconciliation; Policy, Planning and Consultation; and Negotiation of Land Claims, Self-Government and Other Agreements.

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

### Staff and Budget

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation	12	\$2,247,900

As of March 31, 2024, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation had a staff complement of 12.

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

## Vision

The vision of the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is to advance the social and economic aspirations of Indigenous people in the province.

## Mandate

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation focuses on fostering strong relationships with Indigenous peoples, characterized by mutual respect. This approach is the foundation for sound Government policies and programs which support vibrant and prosperous Indigenous communities.

## Lines of Business

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation is responsible for the following Lines of Business:

- Reconciliation
  - Work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, Provincial and Federal departments and agencies and other stakeholders with respect to issues of importance to Indigenous peoples to advance Reconciliation.
- Policy, Planning and Consultation
  - Support the development and delivery of Provincial Government policies and programs that are culturally sensitive, meaningful, and appropriate.
  - Provide advice to Provincial Government departments and agencies on the conduct of Indigenous consultations.
- Negotiation of Land Claims, Self-Government and Other Agreements
  - Negotiate and implement land claims, self-government and other agreements to promote the self-sufficiency, self-governance, and autonomy of Indigenous peoples and to provide clarity and advice on Indigenous rights in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Highlights and Partnerships

The following outlines the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation's Highlights and Partnerships for the reporting period.

**On-going Engagement:** The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continues to facilitate regular discussions between the Premier, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation and Indigenous Leaders. These discussions support and promote on-going communication and help to ensure the priorities of Government are aligned with the priorities of Indigenous peoples.

**Premier-Indigenous Leaders' Roundtable:** On November 27, 2023, the Premier-Indigenous Leaders' Roundtable met in Conne River to discuss mutual interests and shared goals. In attendance were Indigenous leaders representing Indigenous Governments and Organizations, as well as representatives from Indigenous women's organizations, and Friendship Centres. Following presentations from Indigenous leaders, representatives of the Department of Health and Community Services delivered a presentation on Health Transformation and Well-Being to the Roundtable.

**Innu Roundtable:** The Innu Roundtable is an Innu-led initiative that includes representation from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Federal Government, and is mandated to address Innu community health and healing initiatives. The Innu Roundtable and its subcommittees met regularly during the reporting period to advance Innu priorities.

**Consultation and Engagement:** Throughout the reporting period the Office continued to provide consultation advice on resource developments, mineral exploration, environmental assessments, and other matters to Provincial Government departments and project proponents.

**Public Service Training:** The Office, in partnership with the Public Service Commission, released an eLearning module titled Toward Reconciliation: An Overview of Indigenous Histories Across Canada. The course is mandatory for public service employees and provides an overview of Indigenous peoples in Canada and an introduction to Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The module was co-developed with the Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation, and Qalipu First Nation.

**Land Claims:** The Office continues to lead provincial negotiations on the Innu land claim and the provincial implementation of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.

**Day for Truth and Reconciliation:** On September 30, the Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in keeping with the spirit and intent of Call to Action #80 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Provincial Government encouraged all residents to remember and honour the survivors, families and communities who were deeply impacted by residential schools.

**Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People:** The inaugural meeting of the Provincial Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council was held on June 28, 2023 in St. John's. The Council is composed of 11 members, including six Indigenous women representatives, and five provincial Government representatives; one of which is from the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation. The second meeting took place in Corner Brook on September 26 and 27, 2023.

By engaging with the Calls for Justice regarding missing and murdered women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, fostering collaboration with Indigenous communities, and heightening public awareness about the imperative for reconciliation, the Indigenous Women's Reconciliation Council is just one example of the Provincial Government's commitment to advancing a more equitable and inclusive future for all residents.

Minister Dempster attended the Provincial Indigenous Women's Steering Committee Gathering in Cormack on November 27 and 28, 2023. The Gathering provided opportunities for Indigenous women throughout the province to connect and share experiences, current realities, future aspirations, and to identify measures necessary to aid in the improvement of the quality of life of Indigenous women and gender-diverse individuals in their communities.

**Residential School Apologies:** The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked closely with the Office of the Premier to deliver a provincial apology to former students and survivors of residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador in the Fall of 2023.

Premier Furey, on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, apologized to members of NunatuKavut Community Council at a ceremony in Cartwright on September 29, 2023. Premier Furey apologized to Labrador Inuit residential school survivors in each of the five Inuit Communities: Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Hopedale and Nain, as well as Happy Valley – Goose Bay, November 1-3, 2023.

During the ceremonies, Premier Furey apologized for the neglect, abuse, hardship and discrimination experienced by former students of residential schools in the Province.

## Report on Performance

### Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Governments, Organizations and Peoples and Enhancing Relationships

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation works to advance Reconciliation and enhance relationships with Indigenous Governments and Organizations. To achieve this, the Office:

- Works with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and Provincial and Federal Government departments to advance Reconciliation and enable access to programs and services designed for and provided to Indigenous people in the province;
- Works with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and Provincial Government departments and agencies to provide advice on policies, programs, and legislation to better meet the needs of the diverse Indigenous peoples and communities of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Provides leadership and advice with respect to the Duty to Consult Indigenous Governments and Organizations; and
- Leads all Provincial Government negotiations of land claims and self-government agreements, and supports Provincial Government departments and agencies in their implementation of those agreements.

### Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will have continued to advance Reconciliation and enhance the Provincial Government's relationship with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people.

## 2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation will have continued to support initiatives to advance Reconciliation and build positive relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, communities, and people of the Province.

### Results Achieved:

**Indicator 1:** Provided advice and support to Provincial Government department and agencies relating to public policy, programs, legislation and consultation obligations.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked to ensure the consultation obligations of the Provincial Government were met in relation to a variety of projects, including providing advice on Indigenous consultation in energy, forest and mining projects.

The Office also worked with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, various Provincial Government departments, the Federal Government, and other provincial and territorial governments to promote Indigenous interests in policy development.

**Indicator 2:** Participated in committees and forums with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and other partners to advance the priorities of Indigenous peoples and communities.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation continues to facilitate the Premier - Indigenous Leaders' Round Table. The 2023 Roundtable occurred in Conne River on November 27, 2023. Leaders from the province's Indigenous Governments and Organizations, as well as representatives from Women's Indigenous Organizations and Friendship Centres participated.

The Office continued to lead the Province's participation in the Innu Roundtable, a forum where the Innu Nation, Provincial Government, and Federal Government discuss issues of mutual importance. Multiple working group meetings were held throughout the year to advance Innu priorities.

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

**Indicator 3:** Worked with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and Provincial Government departments to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, in partnership with the Public Service Commission, released an eLearning module titled Toward Reconciliation: An Overview of Indigenous Histories Across Canada. The course is mandatory for public service employees and provides an overview of Indigenous peoples in Canada and an introduction to Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The module was co-developed with the Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation, and Qalipu First Nation.

The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation worked closely with the Office of the Premier to deliver a provincial apology to former students and survivors of residential schools in the Fall of 2023.

## Opportunities and Challenges

In the 2023-2026 Activity Plan, the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation committed to advancing Reconciliation and enhancing relationships with Indigenous Governments and Organizations. Actions to meet these commitments presented a number of opportunities and challenges.

Collaborative relationships with Indigenous Governments and Organizations provide an opportunity to listen, understand and advance the priorities of Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Office continues to engage with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to strengthen these relationships and better support the advancement of Indigenous priorities.

The Office has continued work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and the Federal Government to negotiate land claims, self-government agreements, and other agreements on matters of mutual importance. These negotiations provide an opportunity to support Indigenous communities on their path of self-determination.

Delivering provincial services to remote Indigenous communities and ensuring policies and programs are reflective of the unique needs of Indigenous peoples and communities remains challenging. The Office will continue to work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, Provincial Government departments, the Federal Government and other stakeholders to make advancements in these areas.

## Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this report are based on public information provided in the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2024.

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

	Estimates			
	Actual	Amended	Original	
		\$	\$	
<b>OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL</b>				
<b>INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILITION</b>				
<b>CURRENT</b>				
<b>2.7.01. MINISTER'S OFFICE</b>				
01. Salaries	233,220	233,400	207,400	
Operating Accounts:				
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	1,767	-	-	
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	72,460	102,800	128,800	
<i>Supplies</i>	1,862	2,500	2,500	
<i>Purchased Services</i>	534	1,800	1,800	
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	-	500	500	
02. Operating Accounts	76,623	107,600	133,600	
<b>Total: Minister's Office</b>	<b>309,843</b>	<b>341,000</b>	<b>341,000</b>	
<b>2.7.02. INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION</b>				
01. Salaries	1,149,416	1,149,500	1,143,900	
Operating Accounts:				
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	2,245	4,300	4,300	
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	108,551	127,800	92,800	
<i>Supplies</i>	7,392	10,000	10,000	
<i>Purchased Services</i>	143,968	130,600	10,500	
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	2,594	1,000	1,000	
02. Operating Accounts	264,750	273,700	118,600	
10. Grants and Subsidies	629,435	642,400	617,400	
<b>Total: Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation</b>	<b>2,043,601</b>	<b>2,065,600</b>	<b>1,879,900</b>	
<b>TOTAL: INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION</b>	<b>2,353,444</b>	<b>2,406,600</b>	<b>2,220,900</b>	

