

THE PATH TO RECONCILIATION ACT

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

PREPARED BY
MANITOBA INDIGENOUS AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

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Background

On June 2, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released its report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* which included 94 Calls to Action. A final report was released by the TRC on December 15, 2015.

Following the release of the TRC's final report, Manitoba government officials were asked to develop framework legislation, under the direction of a Steering Committee, comprised of the Clerk of the Executive Council and deputy ministers, which would respond to the 94 Calls to Action. This led to the development of The Path to Reconciliation Act that sets out the government's commitment to advancing reconciliation that is informed by, but not limited to the TRC calls to action.

The Act contains seven key components including:

1. a preamble that sets the background for the legislation and helps to explain its meaning and intent;
2. a definition of reconciliation based on the definition provided in the TRC Report;
3. a series of principles to highlight the values that will guide the conduct of the government in its reconciliatory actions;
4. a section which establishes a Minister responsible for reconciliation who will lead the government's participation in the reconciliation process;
5. a section which highlights the concrete commitments of government to prepare a reconciliation strategy;
6. a section which provides for an annual progress report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly each fiscal year; and,
7. a commitment to translate the bill into all seven Indigenous languages identified in the Aboriginal Languages Recognition Act.

The Path to Reconciliation Act is the first reconciliation legislation in Canada. It is intended to guide Manitoba's reconciliation activities including ongoing engagement with Indigenous Nations and peoples in the development and implementation of a reconciliation strategy.

Approach

The Manitoba government is committed to reconciliation, particularly as it relates to addressing the persistent and long-standing negative impacts of residential schools and reconciling the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Manitoba. Because reconciliation is rooted in respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Nations and people, determining what specific actions should be taken can only be done in a collaborative fashion and in full partnership with Indigenous Nations and peoples. In many cases, engagement also needs to occur with all sectors of society.

The government will be guided in its efforts toward reconciliation by the principles of respect, understanding, engagement and action. Beginning in 2016/17, Manitoba will engage with Indigenous Nations and peoples to develop a strategic path forward.

Activities to 2016/17

The new government is moving forward with implementation of The Path to Reconciliation Act and is committed to reconciliation. The new government will be guided by the calls to action of the TRC and the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as set forth in the Act.

Thus far, the new government has engaged in a number of activities intended to address issues of importance to Indigenous Nations and peoples in Manitoba. These include:

- On May 3, 2016, the new government appointed its first 12 member Cabinet which assigns responsibility for The Path to Reconciliation Act to the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations.
- The Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations has met with numerous Indigenous organizations in introductory meetings since the beginning of the new government's mandate. These meetings are ongoing.
- On June 10, 2016, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Indigenous Affairs met with the leaders of the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Indigenous Peoples' Assembly of Canada and Native Women's Association of Canada and confirmed a new approach in support of improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples and promoting reconciliation in Canada. Ministers and leaders agreed to establish the framework for a new Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous Forum (FPTIF), which will replace the former Aboriginal Affairs Working Group.
- On December 8, 2015, the federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the federal Minister of Status of Women and the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs announced a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The inquiry is intended to "seek recommendations on concrete actions to address and prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls". The new government has agreed to fully support the national inquiry. The form of participation and support is being clarified but it is anticipated that Manitoba's primary role will revolve around regional work in support of the inquiry.
- Staff at Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations are engaged in work to translate The Path to Reconciliation legislation into the languages of Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway and Oji-Cree. Upon completion, each translation will be made available to the public.

Activities Beginning in 2016/17

The Path to Reconciliation Act received Royal Assent on March 15, 2016 and the new government was sworn in on May 3, 2016. The government will carry out work in 2016/17 that will lead to the development of an initial engagement strategy to seek feedback on a reconciliation strategy from Indigenous leaders. This initial engagement will be followed by a more fulsome engagement process that will take place at a later date, once initial discussions have occurred.

Given the broad nature of reconciliation, and the diffused authority, responsibility and accountability for addressing legacy issues across government, departments will need to align their efforts and resources with the anticipated strategy to achieve success.

In the interim, and while the strategy is being developed, the government has made a firm commitment to work positively and respectfully with Indigenous people and communities toward the following objectives:

- Through Manitoba Families, the new government has introduced The Protecting Children Act to make it easier for government departments, child and family service authorities, community service providers and law enforcement agencies to share information and collaborate when dealing with victimized and at-risk children.
- Through Manitoba Families, the government will foster innovative community and private sector partnerships that promote practical home ownership opportunities for First Nations families such as the partnership between the Manitoba Real Estate Association and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.
- Through Manitoba Infrastructure and Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, the government will work to build the flood protection necessary to keep Manitobans and their communities safe, beginning with the outlet needed to alleviate flooding around Lake Manitoba.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, the government will establish a duty to consult framework for respectful and productive consultations with Indigenous communities.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, the government will build respectful and effective partnerships involving all levels of government to responsibly and sustainably develop our natural resources.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, the government will work with the federal government on enhanced education funding for students on reserve.

- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, the new government will work positively and respectfully with northern Manitobans and communities.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations and Manitoba Growth Enterprise and Trade, the government will support Urban Aboriginal Economic Development Zones in partnership with First Nations to create jobs and economic opportunities together.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, Manitoba Sustainable Development, and Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade, the government will work positively and respectfully with northern Manitobans and communities, to create a special, targeted program for northern Manitoba called Yes! North.
- Through Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, Manitoba Sustainable Development, and Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade, the government will develop partnerships needed to attract new companies, assist entrepreneurs, and facilitate expansion of existing businesses to provide quality jobs and a stronger economy in the north, focused on 1) sustainable development of natural resources, including forestry and mining and 2) tourism opportunities, including beluga whale watching, polar bear and aurora borealis tours, fishing and hunting.
- Through Manitoba Sustainable Development, the new government will develop comprehensive harvest co-management strategies in consultation with First Nations, Metis and licensed hunters and anglers to give local communities a greater voice and ensure long-term sustainability of our wildlife populations.
- Through Manitoba Sustainable Development, the government will develop a framework to reconcile the needs of industry and rural and northern communities, while continuing to enhance the network of protected areas in Manitoba's natural regions.

