



# Newfoundland and Labrador

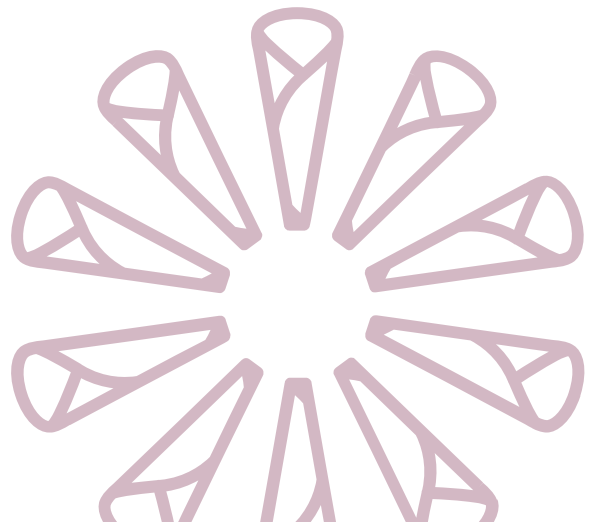
## Minister Welcome

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is the ancestral homelands of many diverse populations of Indigenous peoples who have contributed to 9,000 years of history including the Beothuk on the Island of Newfoundland. Today the province is home to diverse populations of Indigenous and other people. We acknowledge, with respect, their diverse histories and culture.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) is committed to the prevention of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and persons who identify as Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (2SLGBTQQA+). June 3, 2021 marks the second anniversary of the release of *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. GNL has undertaken a review of the 231 Calls for Justice and we continue to assess areas where policies and programming can be enhanced to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQQA+. Through this work we honour the courage and resilience of families and survivors who provided evidence and the experts and knowledge keepers that resulted in the 231 Calls for Justice.

## Highlights/Current Progress

GNL initiatives highlighted below are intended to provide examples of current and ongoing work that align with the four themes represented by the Calls for Justice in the final report of the National Inquiry: Culture, Health and Wellness, Safety and Human Security, and Justice. These examples are in no way representative of the totality of work being undertaken by GNL to improve the status and well-being of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ individuals in the province. Moving forward, GNL will continue to work in collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments and organizations (IGOs) to identify potential long-term, grassroots and holistic initiatives designed to address the Calls for Justice while meeting the varying needs and priorities of Indigenous people in our province. Addressing the systemic causes of violence and racism that prevent Indigenous women, and girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ individuals from reaching their full potential in our province are, and will continue to be, a GNL priority.



## Culture

- ★ GNL collaborated with IGOs through the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and developed a framework on Indigenous Education for Newfoundland and Labrador. This articulates a plan to support implementation of authentic educational experiences for Indigenous students to see themselves reflected accurately and respectfully in curriculum and provides direction for revisions of existing curriculum and development of new curriculum that reflects the history, contributions, traditions, and culture of Indigenous Peoples.
- ★ GNL has enhanced service delivery to indigenous children and youth. Substantive changes have been made to the *Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA)*, to support service delivery to Indigenous Children, Youth and their families. Within the CYFA, the best interest of a child or youth considers the importance of preserving, Indigenous child or youth's unique cultural identity, and the importance of family as the preferred environment for the care of the child.
- ★ GNL offers an *Indigenous Cultural Heritage Program* which supports Indigenous projects that involve the safeguarding of traditions and culture, including language; traditional knowledge and skills; storytelling, music, games and other pastimes; knowledge of the landscape; customs, cultural practices and beliefs; food customs; and living off the land.

## Health and Wellness

- ★ The Towards Recovery Indigenous Health Team is one of eight teams overseeing implementation of *Towards Recovery: A Vision for a Renewed Mental Health and Addictions System for Newfoundland and Labrador*. The Team has representation from all IGOs with authority over delivery of mental health and addictions services. The Team is co-chaired by Health and Community Services and a rotating co-chair from each IGO.
- ★ GNL established a cultural safety-training program through the Health Services Integration Fund (HSIF). The program was developed in partnership with the NL HSIF Advisory Committee and all IGOs that have involvement in health services to improve cultural safety in healthcare.
- ★ GNL is currently developing a comprehensive provincial suicide prevention plan titled: *Life promotion Suicide Prevention Plan*. This plan has been informed in consultation with Indigenous communities and Indigenous health leaders. These consultations on the suicide prevention plan will help ensure the unique perspectives of Innu, Inuit, and Mi'kmaq communities are incorporated into prevention and promotion, intervention and treatment, and postvention and follow-up supports.





## Safety and Security

- ★ GNL through the *Working Together for Violence Free Communities Action Plan*, also commits to working with Indigenous communities to develop their own culturally-appropriate solutions and interventions to prevent violence against women and children. This includes engaging Indigenous governments and communities in building the leadership capacity of Indigenous women, and supporting Indigenous men and boys in their efforts to reject and prevent all forms of violence. One specific example of this is the Indigenous Violence Prevention grants that take a holistic approach to violence prevention led by Indigenous communities. The foundation of this plan still guides GNL's work as we continue towards next steps that are targeted and solution focused.

## Justice

- ★ GNL offers cultural competency and trauma-informed training to justice-sector employees to educate and inform staff of Indigenous cultures and traditions to improve the interactions and experiences of Indigenous people within the justice system.
- ★ GNL offers culturally appropriate services at the Labrador Correctional Centre and the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women through partnerships with the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and First Light, St. John's Friendship Centre.

## Priorities

GNL recognizes that the first step in advancing our commitment to address the Calls for Justice is to engage with Indigenous leaders and communities. This engagement will be meaningful, respectful, and culturally-appropriate and will include Indigenous leaders, elders and knowledge holders.

## Concluding Remarks

GNL will continue to advance the necessary work in response to the final report of the National Inquiry, including continuing work with our partners on the National Action Plan and its implementation.

