



Government of Nova Scotia

“This work is important and urgent. Collaboration is key to our success, and we continue to ensure that all voices are heard and reflected in our holistic approach to addressing the 231 Calls for Justice.”

— **Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley**

Co-Chair, Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs

“Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association brings attention to important issues affecting our women, our men, and our communities. Together with the Province, we are taking action on things that matter.”

— **Bernadette Marshall**

President, Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association

“We continue to centre Mi’kmaq women’s leadership, as we work in partnership to strengthen safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people. The only way forward is together.”

— **Hon. Karla MacFarlane**

Minister Responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Minister of L’nu Affairs

Nova Scotia is pleased to reaffirm our commitment to ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people and provide a joint update on our progress. We honour and acknowledge all survivors, family members, those lost to violence, and everyone affected by ongoing experiences of violence. The Mi’kmaq and the Province have embraced a collaborative approach to responding to the Calls for Justice. Families and survivors are at the centre of our work. We are walking together in partnership to address priorities identified by the Mi’kmaq, in the Final Report, and in the National Action Plan in a collaborative way.

Key Highlights

The principles that guided our approach throughout the Inquiry – honouring relationships, keeping families at the centre, and collaboration and partnership – continue to guide our work and actions taken to date to respond to the Calls for Justice in Nova Scotia. Through a holistic approach, progress is being made on interconnected, foundational areas such as health and wellness, culture and language, child welfare, housing, gender-based violence, and economic security. The safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people remains a critical priority on our pathway to reconciliation.



There have been significant shifts in women's leadership within Nova Scotia, most recently with the election of Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley as the first female co-chair of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, and the appointment of the Honourable Karla MacFarlane as the first provincial Minister to hold both the Status of Women and L'nu Affairs portfolios and responsibilities. These are important signals on the role of women's leadership and the significance of the work ahead.

Progress/Successes

Nova Scotia continues to collaborate with Mi'kmaw partners, through the leadership of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSNWA). Through engagement with families, grassroots, and organizations, NSNWA identified that a critical next step would be to host their first Mawio'mi in September 2021 to provide a safe space to empower women, girls, and two-spirited people to gather, share, engage, and support one another. This gathering represented a decolonized approach to Indigenous-led engagement to gather knowledge, experience, and solutions to inform future actions, through ceremony and healing. NSNWA will host the next Mawio'mi in August 2022.

The NSNWA was contracted by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to conduct engagement in the Atlantic region to contribute to AFN's action plan on MMIWG. In fall of 2021, a total of 665 individuals participated and the resultant report includes Atlantic specific recommendations, priorities, and next steps for action.

In November 2021, the Province ended the use of birth alerts, and enhanced supports for families through the new Family Connections Program. Indigenous-led work is underway to "decolonize birth" by engaging with Mi'kmaw women about traditional birthing practices and ceremonies and strengthening the continuum of care and supports, building capacity for Indigenous midwifery and doulas.



The Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre (JPC) continues to provide supports to Indigenous women off-reserve in Sydney, many of whom live with complex and intersecting realities of homelessness, poverty, violence, addiction, and multiple system interactions. JPC has expanded access to mental health supports, supervised parenting visits, food and clothing bank, economic supports, and cultural activities.

Tajikeimik, a collaboration of all 13 Mi'kmaw First Nations, is leading health transformation on behalf of all Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. In March 2022, the Province provided funding to Tajikeimik to develop a culturally responsive mental health and addictions strategy. This work exemplifies the partnership between the Mi'kmaw and the provincial health system to address health disparities and improve access to culturally safe mental wellness care and support.



In April 2022, the Mi'kmaw Language Act was passed. The Act recognizes Mi'kmaw as Nova Scotia's first language and will support efforts to preserve and promote it now and for future generations. This work reinforces the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and aligns with MMIWG Calls for Justice, to ensure meaningful access to language, culture, and identity as a foundation for resilience and safety. The legislation will be proclaimed and will take effect on or after Treaty Day, on October 1, 2022.

Our collective work recognizes the interconnected and intergenerational impacts of systemic discrimination, racism, and sexism. In April 2022, the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act was passed. This new legislation is the first of its kind in Canada, and outlines the government's approach to addressing systemic racism, hate, and inequity, and commits to developing a provincial strategy and a health equity framework by July 2023.

Next Steps/Priorities

On our pathway to build a better future and write a new story with Indigenous partners, we are actively working to connect, align, and integrate our responses and actions. Some specific next steps include:

- Developing and launching Standing Together, the coordinated provincial approach to prevent domestic violence, integrating knowledge from Indigenous-led initiatives and projects;
- Building promising practices and culturally responsive supports through Creating Communities of Care Through a Customary Law Approach, which is supporting urban Indigenous and African Nova Scotian survivors of gender-based violence;
- Partnering with and supporting a multi-year Mi'kmaw language revitalization strategy (stemming from the new legislation);
- Continuing to raise awareness on the context and impacts of MMIWG, including a Mi'kmaw-led media campaign on sexual exploitation and non-consensual sharing of intimate images; and,
- Supporting the development of the NS Indigenous Human Trafficking Strategy, led by NSNWA.

