



**Speaking Notes  
for**

**Hon. Murray Rankin  
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**

**Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation/Declaration Act  
Secretariat - Estimates 2023/24  
Introductory notes**

**BC Legislature**

**Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 TBD**

**Time: 3:30 pm TBD**

## INTRODUCTION

- It is my pleasure and honour to speak today on Budget 2023 and estimates for the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.
- Acknowledge: Lekwungen [*Luh-KWUNG-in*] peoples and Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

[PAUSE]

- Joining me for Estimates from the Ministry of Indigenous relations and Reconciliation are:
  - Deputy Minister Tom McCarthy,
  - Ranbir Parmar, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer,

- Alexandra Banford, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Negotiations and Regional Operations Division.
- Ann Marie Sam, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Reconciliation, Transformation and Strategies Division,
- Jennifer Melles, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships Division, and
- Richard Purnell, Executive Lead for the New Fiscal Framework.

[PAUSE]

- Joining me from the Declaration Act Secretariat, which is separate from the ministry...

- Si Sityaawks [*See-Sit-Yowks*] Jessica Wood, Associate Deputy Minister...
- ...and cáʔaa [*Sah-ahh*] Priscilla Sabbas-Watts, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Legislative Transformation and Engagement.
- Additionally, I'd like to introduce Tracey Herbert, CEO, First Peoples' Cultural Council.

[PAUSE]

## **Reconciliation**

- I am proud of the work of this ministry, the Secretariat, and government as a whole.

- We are demonstrating our commitment to reconciliation in B.C. through tangible and meaningful action to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples...
- ...as required by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and in meaningful consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.

[PAUSE]

- Budget 2023 provides dedicated funding that supports the advancement of reconciliation and implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C.
- The combined budget for the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Declaration Act Secretariat is \$188 million.

- It will allow us to meet our current and ongoing obligations under existing agreements and initiatives...
- ...and to continue to advance tangible reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. – both immediately and longer-term.
- Because creating meaningful and lasting reconciliation is a journey we must take together.

[PAUSE]

- Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway...
- ...or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.

- Reconciliation is a provincial imperative.
- Addressing the devastating impacts of colonization and dismantling systemic racism will take sustained effort from all of us.

[PAUSE]

- We've built a strong foundation through partnerships with Indigenous Peoples over the past five years.
- We know there is still so much more to do.
- This important work must continue, accelerate even.
- There is a bright future ahead, and we will get there by continuing to work together in partnership with Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

[PAUSE]

## **First Peoples' Cultural Council**

- B.C. has exceptional language diversity, with half of all Indigenous languages in Canada located here.
- Across the province, 34 distinct First Nations languages are spoken.
- We are working in partnership to support First Nations communities in their efforts to restore their languages, cultures, arts and heritage.
- I am pleased Budget 2023/24 continues to strengthen First Nations-led efforts to revitalize Indigenous heritage, languages, cultures and arts...



- ...with a **more than \$6 million, permanent, per year operational uplift** to the First Peoples Cultural Council.

[PAUSE]

- Providing funding for FPCC's core operations supports the increased investment and progress made in language revitalization since 2018.
- Through their partnership with the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, FPCC is laying the groundwork so that First Nations languages, arts and heritage can be passed on to future generations.
- Communities are developing language revitalization plans, training staff and implementing programs that make a difference by documenting the languages and creating new speakers.

[PAUSE]

- On International Mother Languages Day, FPCC released the 2022 Report on the Status of BC First Nations Languages...
- ...which surveys First Nations communities to track language learning accomplishments.
- The report shows there are growing numbers of speakers and more language learners than ever before...
- Most important of all, an increasing number of adults are passing the language to the next generation...
- ...with many more children learning their First Nations language as their mother tongue at home.

[PAUSE]

- With the help of FPCC, First Nations communities across B.C. are adopting new and creative approaches to language learning.
- Investing in First Nations languages as well as arts and cultural heritage revitalization is an important way to connect people to community, land, and culture.
- Our government is here to support that.
- We want to help build a province where First Nations languages and cultures are living, used and celebrated everywhere.

[PAUSE]

## **Declaration Act Secretariat**

- This year, the ministry's fiscal plan also reflects core funding to fully resource the Declaration Act Secretariat.
- Funding for the Secretariat is expressed as a separate item in the Budget estimates.
- This is consistent with the Secretariat's unique reporting structure...
- The Secretariat is an independent office – reporting directly to the me as Minister, and distinct from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

[PAUSE]

- Established last year, the Secretariat guides and assists all of government to ensure our legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration...
- ...and is developed in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.
- In October, the Secretariat released new guidance for the B.C. government on best practices for working with Indigenous Peoples on the development of provincial laws and policies.

- The *‘Interim Approach to Implement the Requirements of Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act’* provides every ministry and sector of government with clear, transparent processes for how they are to work together with Indigenous Peoples, as required by the Declaration Act, and Section 35 of our Constitution.

[PAUSE]

## **Reconciliation Agreements**

- The Declaration Act supports government in deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- It does so:
  - Through an Action Plan that outlines actions to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration...

- Through the alignment of provincial laws with the UN Declaration...
- By enabling government to enter into shared decision-making agreements...
- And by allowing flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governments.

[PAUSE]

- Much of the ministry's work in this budget focuses on the negotiation and implementation of treaties, shared decision-making mechanisms, and other constructive arrangements.
- Our government is focused on upholding Indigenous rights, including title, and supporting long-term, flexible agreements that can evolve over time.

[PAUSE]

## **Treaty taxation**

- Budget 2023/24 also supports our work to align our taxation policy approaches with the UN Declaration.
- We are listening to Treaty First Nations and those First Nations in the Treaty Process...
- ...to remove barriers to treaty and develop measures that support self-determination.
- That is why Budget 2023 amends the Treaty First Nations Taxation Act and the Nisga'a Final Agreement Act...



- Now Nisga'a and Treaty First Nations can exempt citizens and members from property taxes on their land.

[PAUSE]

- Budget 2023/24 is part of our commitment to working responsively with First Nations...
- ...to being a partner that helps clear the pathway to improving existing treaties and supporting concluding new treaties.

[PAUSE]

## **New Fiscal Framework**

- Indigenous governments, like all governments, require sources of revenue to deliver services and meet accountabilities to their citizens.

- Budget 2023/24 continues to support the ministry's work, together with the Ministry of Finance, to co-develop of a new fiscal framework with Indigenous Peoples.
- The initial focus has been on co-development of principles and objectives for a new fiscal framework and co-development of a new forestry revenue sharing model.

[PAUSE]

- Sharing revenue with First Nations communities is an important reconciliation tool.
- It supports implementation of the UN Declaration and the self-determined pursuit of economic, social, and community development.

- This year's we are forecasting \$338.7 million projected revenue sharing for forestry, mining, tourism, and oil and gas.
- This doesn't include a forecast \$110 million in gaming revenue sharing.
- Because ensuring First Nations share in the wealth generated by economic opportunities helps support economic growth in First Nations communities and for all British Columbians.

[PAUSE]

## Supplementary estimates

- Earlier this session, the ministry presented supplementary estimate for Budget 2022/23...
- ...including a \$75-million accelerated payments package for existing agreements with five First Nations.
- I'm proud of the work of the ministry and Declaration Act Secretariat to ensure Indigenous voices and interests were central in discussions in this year's budget process.

[PAUSE]

- We have been carefully putting the surplus to work for people and we will continue to tackle the big challenges we face.

- This includes historic investments to improve life for Indigenous peoples.
- And I look forward to sharing more good news with our Indigenous partners in the coming weeks and months.

[PAUSE]

## **Conclusion**

- As you can see, funding decisions for Budget 2023/24 are underpinned by government's commitment to tangible reconciliation through the implementation of the UN Declaration...
- ...by prioritizing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

- We remain committed to investing in ways that make life better for people in B.C., improve the services people rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.
- I look forward to questions from the members of this house.
- Thank you.

-END-

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# Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

## 2023/24 Estimates

### Finance Based Questions and Answers

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## KEY MESSAGES

- We are deeply committed to advancing reconciliation in B.C. – guided by the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act, and with meaningful consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
- Reconciliation is a journey – systemic issues like anti-Indigenous racism and helping Indigenous Peoples heal from the devastating impacts of colonialism will take sustained effort over many years.
- Budget 2023 provides dedicated, annual funding to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Declaration Act Secretariat to support the advancement of reconciliation and implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C.
- It includes a \$6-million annual increase for the First Peoples’ Cultural Council, supporting Indigenous led efforts to revitalize languages, cultures, arts and heritage.
- There’s increased funding for the Declaration Act Secretariat, a dedicated body to support government’s reconciliation efforts by ensuring laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Act and legislation is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples.
- And there is important ongoing funding that goes directly to First Nations, supporting the services and priorities in their communities, including \$110 million forecast in gaming revenue sharing.

- Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.
- Supported by Budget 2023, we are building an even stronger, more inclusive, and more just British Columbia that will create a better future for Indigenous Peoples.

## Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

### 2023/24 Estimates

#### Finance Based Questions and Answers

1. **MIRR's 2023/24 budget is \$188.262 million. This is an \$17.643 million increase (10.3%) from the previous year. What is it being spent on?**
  - \$6.040M increase for the First Peoples Cultural Council to provide stable funding for core operations and staffing
  - \$1.218M increase approved in *Budget 2022* to provide core funding to fully resource the Declaration Act Secretariat as only partial funding was provided in year 1 (2022/23)
  - \$0.171M increase for 2 FTE's to support Permitting
  - \$2.042M increase for salaries and benefits for wage mandate
  - (\$0.156M) decrease in Ministers Office budget
  - \$7.830 net increase in the Treaty and Other Agreements vote.
  - \$0.030M increase to the First Citizens fund
  - 0.468M increase to the First Nations Clean Energy Business fund

**2. The Treaty & Other Vote has increased by \$7.830M over Budget 2022. Why?**

- The ministry budget is funded to match signed agreement costs.
- Payments to First Nations have increased by \$7.830M over 2022/23.
  - \$15.982M increase in non treaty agreements
  - \$0.558 increase in Treaty agreements
  - \$202.371M increase in revenue sharing payments offset by \$211.081 increase in revenue recoveries generating a net (\$8.710M) decrease in Revenue Sharing agreements.

Type of Payment	2022/23	2023/24	Change
Treaty	3.915	4.474	0.559
Non Treaty	85.281	101.261	15.981
Revenue Sharing	136.421	338.792	202.371
<b>Total Payments to First Nations (Gross Budget)</b>	<b>225.617</b>	<b>444.527</b>	<b>218.911</b>
Revenue Recovery	(117.288)	(328.369)	(211.081)
<b>Net Budget Treaty and Other Agreements</b>	<b>108.329</b>	<b>116.159</b>	<b>7.830</b>

**3. What is the value of payments going to First Nations in 2023/24 funded by the Treaty and Other Vote?**

- Treaty and Other Agreements budget is \$116.159M, a net gain of \$7.830M (7.2%):
  - \$444.528 million is projected to be paid to First Nations through treaty and non-treaty agreements;
    - \$338.792 million projected revenue sharing (forestry, mineral, resort; oil & gas);
    - \$101.262 million non-treaty agreements (e.g. reconciliation; strategic engagement agreements, LNG);
    - \$4.474 million in treaty related agreements.
- Of the \$444.528 million, \$328.369 million is projected to be recovered from taxation, stumpage, royalties and rents. Recovered funds subtracted from \$444.528 million provides the \$116.159M budget vote.

#### **4. What impacts Revenue Sharing Forecasts?**

- Revenue Sharing Forecasts are impacted by a number of factors:
  - Total number of signed agreements
  - Commodity price fluctuations for items such as copper and coal as well as mine operating profit margins (mineral tax) (ECDA's)
  - Resort income on accommodations (RECDA's)
  - Increases in stumpage values and harvesting activities (FCRSA's)
  - Higher oil and gas royalties (EBA's)
  - The economy as a whole

#### **5. Why does the Treaty and Other budget decrease in 2024/25?**

- The ministry budget is funded to match the ongoing cost of signed agreements.
- The decrease in 2024/25 is due to multiple Economic Benefit Agreements (EBA) expiring.
  - Treaty 8 (West Moberly & Prophet) expired in 2021/22 fiscal year.
  - Halfway EBA expires 2022/23
  - Saulteau and McLeod Lake EBA expires in 2023/24.

#### **6. What is the purpose of the financing transactions allocated to the Ministry?**

- Financing transactions for land transfers allow the ministry to prioritize private land purchases over the three-year plan as part of treaty or other agreements. Planned land purchases for 2023/24 are \$39.800M, which is a \$5.540M increase from 2022/23.
- Financing transactions for the BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership have been updated based on current revenue projections. The province forecasts to share \$110.000M in 2023/24.

- Financing transaction costs were added in Budget 2021.

**7. Why is there a large decrease in disbursements in Schedule D – Inventory in 2023/24 and 2024/25.**

- Schedule D allows the ministry to purchase private land and hold in inventory until it is transferred to a First Nation under final agreement
- Spending plans represent current needs and are updated annually as part of the budget process.

**8. How does gaming revenue sharing with first nations work?**

- A commitment to share \$3 billion in revenue with First Nations over the next 25 years is supporting self-government and self-determination, strong, healthy communities and services that make life better for families.
- Amendments to the Gaming Control Act allow the Province and First Nations to finalize a long-term gaming agreement. Signed September 2020.
- Like every government, First Nations need stable, predictable sources of revenue to fund their priorities – critical things for every government, such as infrastructure, services that build healthy communities and the staff to get it done.
- All First Nations communities in B.C. are eligible to become members in the limited partnership.
- Each First Nation that participates in the revenue sharing agreement can use the gaming revenue to support priorities for its community, such as enhanced social services, education, housing, infrastructure, cultural revitalization and self-government capacity.
- The revenue may be used in six areas that support governance, capacity building and strengthened program and service delivery:
  - health and wellness;
  - infrastructure, safety, transportation and housing;
  - economic and business development;

- education, language, culture and training;
- community development and environmental protection; and
- capacity building, fiscal management and governance.
- Direct distribution of gaming revenue to individuals is not permitted.

**9. How much gaming revenue has been shared since approval in Budget 2019?**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount \$</b>
2019/20 & 2020/21	\$194,840,000
2021/22	\$58,059,120
2022/23	\$100,870,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$353,769,120</b>

**10. Will the ministry restore the level of funding to the First Citizens Fund seen five years ago?**

- The First Citizens Fund is a special fund within government’s Consolidated Revenue Fund and the monies do not come from the ministry budget.
- Cabinet Confidences
- This funding supports Indigenous small business development, First Nations language preservation, bursaries for Indigenous post-secondary students, and assistance for elders to attend their annual gathering.

**11. Why is the ministry increasing funding to the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund?**

- The funding increase is primarily due to increased projected revenue sharing payments.

- The total annual outflows include additional funding that has been dedicated to helping remote First Nations communities reduce reliance on diesel-powered generators. The additional 5% for this initiative was renewed in 2023/24 fiscal year for an additional three years. In the 2026/2027 fiscal year this fund will be reduced from 55% to 50%.

**12.Does Budget 2023 provide funding for First People’s Cultural Council?**

- Yes
- Budget 2023 provides \$19.060M over the fiscal plan (\$6.040M in 2023/24, \$6.300M in 2024/25 and \$6.720M in 25/26 ongoing).
- Ensures that FPCC is a viable, fully functioning Crown Corporation
- Permanent operational funding will allow FPCC to attract and retain the highly specialized program and technical experts necessary to deliver language, arts and cultural heritage programming and documentation efforts in First Nations communities across BC
- Will also address the equity issue between FPCC and other Crowns of similar size and mandates

**13.Why did \$7.3M of the Indigenous Funding Program get transferred to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship?**

- Allows WLRS to shift away from recovering funds from MIRR for Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Framework
- Funding is based on 7 forums per year at an average of \$1M per forum (4 Collaborative Stewardship forums and 3 Environmental Stewardship Initiative forums)
- This transfer also includes \$0.1M for the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Working Group and \$0.2M for the Pre-Collaborative Stewardship Framework for Secwepemc FN.

**14.Budget 2023 provides funding to support Permitting. Why?**

- MIRR received \$0.171M in 2023/24 to hire 2 FTE’s

- An additional \$0.119M will be received in 2024/25 for an additional FTE for a total of 3 FTE's
- Addressing the necessary strategic shifts in land management is critical to advance the permitting backlogs.
- MIRR will assist other Natural Resource Ministries in strategic direction in managing the land base

**15. Why is there a decrease in the Minister's Office?**

- Minister Office budgets were reviewed as part of Budget 2023 to reflect positions within Minister's Office staff, as well as to bring current budgets in line with the approved budgets set by the Office of the Premier.
- There are no changes in staffing levels as a result of this decrease.
- 2023/24 continues to support 7 positions including Minister.

#	Position
1	Chief of Staff
2	Ministerial Assistant
3	Ministerial Assistant
4	Executive Assistant
5	Administrative Coordinator
6	Administrative Assistant

**16. What is the Minister's compensation?**

- Information on compensation is available on the following website:

[Remuneration and Allowances – Members' Guide to Policy and Resources \(leg.bc.ca\)](http://leg.bc.ca)

The compensation is broken into 2 parts:



- Basic Compensation as an MLA is \$115,046
- Top-up of 50% for being a Minister is \$57,523
- Total \$172,569

**17. How much was spent on travel by the Minister?**

- The Minister's Office travel budget is \$85,000 and was the same last year.
- Minister travel costs from April 1, 2022 to March 10, 2023 are: \$60,505 and proactively disclosed every quarter.

**18. How many other organizations does MIRR directly contribute funds to, and how much will be provided in 2023/2024?**

- The ministry provides funding for several organizations.
- The exact amounts are available in public accounts, released June each year.

**19. How much of the budget is being spent on the treaty process?**

- MIRR has budgeted approximately \$16.5 million for the negotiations of agreements (treaty and non treaty).
- MIRR has budgeted \$116.159 million through the Treaties and Other Agreements Funding vote to fund existing agreements, including both treaty and non-treaty related agreements.
- B.C. and Canada split the value of settlement benefits offered in treaty equally, where Canada provides all or the majority of the cash, and British Columbia provides all or the majority of the land.

**20. Were there any audits of MIRR programs?**

- To date, there were no OCG or OAG MIRR specific audits.

**21. How much was spent on Travel in the Ministry? How does this compare to last year?**

- The ministry spent \$.158 million in Fiscal 21/22.
- From April 1 2022 to March 10 2023, the ministry has spent \$0.756 million on travel.

**22. How many people work for MIRR and where are they located?**

- As of March 1 2023, MIRR had 296 staff in 10 locations around the Province.
- Locations include:

Cranbrook	2	Smithers	8
Fort St John	6	Surrey	5
Kamloops	7	Victoria	255
Nanaimo	5	Williams Lake	4
Prince George	3	Fort Nelson	1

**23. How many FTEs are there in MIRR and how does this compare to past years?**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average FTE burn</b>
<b>2022/23 – February YTD Average</b>	<b>278.64</b>
2021/22 – March YTD Average	246.20

2020/21 - March YTD Average	229.40
2019/20 – March YTD Average	235.35
2018/19 - March YTD Average	227.67

**24. How many vacant positions are there?**

- The number of positions the ministry can accommodate within its budget depends on many factors including the staff mix throughout the year, thus the number of vacant positions will fluctuate.

**25. What is the ministry’s budget for contracts for the coming year? How does this compare to last year?**

<b>2022/23 Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Reason</b>
\$2.282M	\$2.282M	0.00	No change

## MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION 2023 Budget Highlights

### Ministry Budget

- MIRRs 2023/24 budget is \$188.262M. **This represents a \$17.643M or 10.3% increase from the previous year.** The net budget increase is comprised of:
  - o \$8.097M net increase in the Ministry Operations Vote;
  - o \$7.830 net increase in government transfers under the Treaty and Other Agreements Vote;
  - o \$1.218M increase to the Declaration Act Secretariat;
  - o \$0.030M increase in government transfers under the First Citizen Fund;
  - o \$0.468M increase in the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund.
- This budget will continue to allow MIRR to effectively deliver its mandate.
  - o The \$8.097M increase in the Ministry Operations Vote is made up of:
    - \$6.040M increase for First Peoples Cultural Council;
    - \$2.040M to fund negotiated salary increases for wage mandate;
    - \$0.171M increase for 2 FTE to support permitting;
    - \$0.002M to fund salary increments of Budget 2022 approval for Climate Action Initiatives, off set by;
    - \$(0.156M) net decrease to Minister's Office.
  - o \$7.830 net increase in the Treaty and Other Agreements vote to match funded agreement costs.
    - \$17.757M increase in LNG agreements
    - \$0.559 increase in Treaty agreements
    - \$(1.776M) decrease in Non Treaty agreements
    - \$(8.710M) net decrease in Revenue Sharing due to an increase in the Recovery to Vote
  - o \$1.218M increase for the Declaration Act Secretariat to fund incremental salary costs and fully fund resources
  - o The First Citizen Fund increase of \$0.030M due to a small increase in investment fund revenues.
  - o The First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund net expenditure increase of \$0.468M is because the forecast for how much money will be returned to the Fund through land and water rents associated with power projects has increased as projects come on-line.

\$ millions	2022/23	\$Change	2022/23 restated	2023/24	\$ Change	% Change
Vote 32 - Ministry Operations	49,815	-	49,815	57,912	8,097	16.3%
Vote 33 - Treaty & Other Agreements Funding	115,629	(7,300)	108,329	116,159	7,830	7.2%
Vote 35 - Declaration Act Secretariat	3,213	-	3,213	4,431	1,218	37.9%
Sub-Total	168,657	(7,300)	161,357	178,502	17,145	61%
First Citizens Fund	1,686	-	1,686	1,716	30	1.8%
First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund	7,576	-	7,576	8,044	468	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,919</b>	<b>(7,300)</b>	<b>170,619</b>	<b>188,262</b>	<b>17,643</b>	<b>10.3%</b>

\* 2022/23 restated due to the permanent transfer of the Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Framework to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

# **Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**

## **2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan**

**February 2023**



For more information on the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation contact:

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Or visit our website at

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/irr>

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## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Murray Rankin".

Honourable Murray Rankin, KC  
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
February 10, 2023

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## Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will support the government’s priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

## Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation](#) (the Ministry) guides and helps coordinate the Province of British Columbia’s efforts to achieve true and lasting reconciliation with [Indigenous Peoples](#)<sup>1</sup> by working in respectful partnerships that recognize inherent rights.

Reconciliation is important to everyone as we work together to address historic wrongs through the path laid out by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada: Calls to Action](#). These efforts create a better province for all British Columbians.

As the first province in Canada to recognize and uphold Indigenous Peoples’ human rights in law through the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act), British Columbia is implementing the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration) as our shared framework for reconciliation.

The Declaration Act supports government in deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples through an [Action Plan](#) that outlines actions to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration, through the alignment of provincial laws with the UN Declaration, by enabling government to enter into shared decision-making agreements, and allowing flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governments.

The Ministry furthers [reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples](#) by collaboratively developing policy and practices, and negotiating and implementing proactive, enduring [agreements, partnerships, and treaties based on recognition of rights](#). The Ministry’s focus is to build lasting relationships with

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Indigenous” used throughout this document is inclusive of all peoples of Indigenous ancestry, including First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit.

Indigenous Peoples through flexible agreements that can evolve over time and collaborative approaches to policy making.

The Ministry engages with Indigenous governments, communities, organizations, as well as federal, municipal and treaty partners, stakeholders, and the public. While reconciliation is a whole-of-government responsibility, the Ministry provides guidance and leadership to other areas of government on establishing and enhancing relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

Reconciliation commitments are achieved by prioritizing collaboration and engagement with Indigenous Peoples through trauma-informed and culturally safe practices. Strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities<sup>2</sup> and leveraging Indigenous knowledge and perspectives improves social and economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and all British Columbians.

## Operating Environment

Global pressures including the continued presence of COVID-19, a shifting economic forecast, and ongoing climate-related emergencies impact every British Columbian. These external conditions raise the importance of working in partnership to advance reconciliation and strengthen government-to-government relationships with Indigenous Peoples across the Province so that we can continue to meet these challenges together.

Supporting these efforts, the Province has adopted a distinctions-based approach to advancing reconciliation and implementing the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This means the B.C. Government's work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples is conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of each while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.

The release of the Action Plan in February 2022 outlines actions to be undertaken over the next five years by all of government in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is well represented within the plan and partners with several other ministries on various actions that support implementation of the Declaration Act and advance reconciliation in British Columbia.

Established in 2022, the Declaration Act Secretariat has taken the lead on guiding government's efforts to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration as required by the Declaration Act. As an independent office within the provincial government, the Secretariat reports directly to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and works alongside all B.C. Government ministries to support implementation of the Declaration Act.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "communities" means the diversity of Indigenous communities as defined by Indigenous Peoples and includes descriptions such as urban, rural, metropolitan, remote, land-based and reserve.

## Performance Planning

### **Goal 1: Advance equitable social and economic outcomes of Indigenous Peoples**

The Ministry is committed to advancing social and economic outcomes in Indigenous communities in comprehensive and holistic ways that are determined by and organized around each community's priorities. These efforts include sharing the benefits of economic development with Indigenous communities and increasing opportunities for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the economy.

#### **Objective 1.1: Partner on shared initiatives that improve the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples**

The Ministry works with Indigenous, provincial, and federal agencies and partners to advance opportunities that improve the health and wellness of Indigenous communities through community-focused initiatives.

##### **Key Strategies**

- Coordinate funding between federal, provincial, and Indigenous partners to support First Nations-led investigations at former Residential Schools and Indian Hospital sites in B.C. and enhance Indigenous-delivered mental health, wellness, and cultural supports for residential school and intergenerational survivors.
- Work with the [Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#) and the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) to advance solutions that support their respective mandates.
- Expand supports to urban Indigenous organizations and leadership, including Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous Coalitions, to deliver Indigenous-centered services and support cultural connections, and support online dialogues around organizing urban Indigenous voices to address urban reconciliation priorities.

##### **Discussion**

The Ministry continues to work in close consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that communities' health, wellbeing, and sociocultural priorities across the province are actionable.

Work to support investigations at the sites of former Residential Schools and Indian Hospital Sites in B.C. is complex and challenging. The Ministry continues to implement the BC Residential School Response Fund that provides funding to First Nations investigating these sites and continues to engage with federal, provincial, and Indigenous partners to promote a coordinated, culturally safe, and trauma-informed response to site research and investigations.

The Ministry also continues to engage with the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women to identify and action priorities that support the wellness of Indigenous women in B.C., and with the

First Peoples' Cultural Council to secure long-term funding that will enable long-term and sustainable Indigenous culture, language, and arts programming.

Work is underway to develop indicators that report on reconciliation outcomes associated with implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan. As this work continues to evolve, the Ministry will seek out opportunities for alignment and to introduce performance measures in future Service Plans to support reporting on this objective.

## **Objective 1.2: Support Indigenous communities in advancing self-determination and governance building**

The Ministry works with Indigenous Peoples to advance self-determination and governance building, supporting economic, social, and cultural initiatives aligned with the priorities of individual communities and transitioning delivery of public services to Indigenous governments.

### **Key Strategies**

- Co-develop with Indigenous Peoples, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, a [new distinctions-based fiscal framework](#) that supports the operation of Indigenous governments.
- Work with other ministries and Indigenous partners to co-develop and implement new policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with Indigenous Peoples.
- Collaborate, align, and leverage opportunities with the federal government to support Indigenous self-governance, culture, language, and heritage.
- Partner with Indigenous Peoples and other ministries to advance CleanBC objectives by promoting increased Indigenous participation in the clean energy sector and supporting diesel displacement initiatives in remote communities, and supporting Indigenous communities to adapt to, and recover from, the impacts of climate change.

### **Discussion**

Indigenous governments, like all governments, require sources of revenue to deliver services and meet accountabilities to their citizens. The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, is leading the co-development of a new fiscal framework with Indigenous Peoples, with an initial focus on co-development of principles and objectives for a new fiscal framework and co-development of a new forestry revenue sharing model. Over the long term, the vision of this work is to implement a coherent, principled, and rights-based fiscal framework that recognizes, respects, and supports self-determination.

As described in the discussion section underneath Objective 1.1, the Ministry will be reviewing opportunities for alignment of Action Plan indicators as they become available to support reporting under this objective in future Service Plans.

