

Information Note
Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

Title: Provincial support for the Labrador Innu

Issue: To describe initiatives undertaken by the provincial government on Innu issues since 2003.

Overview:

Since 2003 the Province has made substantial investments of financial and in-kind resources to Aboriginal communities and people in the areas of land claims, self-government and reserves; programs and services enhancements; resources and community infrastructure; and other initiatives.

New Dawn Agreement

- On September 26, 2008, the Labrador Innu and the Province reached the Tshash Petapen Agreement (jash pey-taah-ben)/New Dawn Agreement. The agreement resolves key issues relating to matters between the province and Innu Nation surrounding Innu land claims, the Lower Churchill Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA) and Innu redress for the Upper Churchill hydroelectric development. On February 16, 2010, the Parties initialled the IBA and redress agreement and a bilateral land claims Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) with some federal issues outstanding. Final agreements based on the Tshash Petapen Agreement will be subject to ratification by the Innu people. Following Ratification, the Innu, federal government and the Province will continue to work towards a Final Agreement on the Innu land claims in Labrador.

Reserve Creation

- On December 11, 2003, a Reserve was established at Natuashish.
- On November 23, 2006, the Reserve at Sheshatshiu was created.
- The creation of these reserves has resulted in exemption from provincial taxation for the Innu, which represents lost revenue to the Province. It has also ensured Innu access to federal programs for First Nations on Reserve.

Consultation on Developments

- Government has consulted the Innu on a variety of developments in Labrador, and has provided capacity funding on several major projects for consultation and/or environmental monitoring, including:
 - Lower Churchill – capacity funding from Nalcor
 - Forestry Agreements for District 19A in central Labrador
 - Environmental monitoring during construction of Phase III of the Trans-Labrador Highway
 - Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board – federal/provincial funding for Board operations and Innu/Inuit capacity (since 2002)
- Government and the Innu also formed the Environmental Management Planning Consultative Committee, with participation from the federal government, which provides advice on the induced impacts on the opening of Phase III of the Trans-Labrador Highway. Many of its recommendations were incorporated into the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador, and informed a recent decision to enhance the Inland Fish Enforcement Program in Labrador.

- Government worked with the Innu and other partners to reach agreement on a proposed boundary for the Mealy Mountains National Park, announced February 5, 2010. The Innu stand to benefit from a Park Impacts and Benefits Agreement with Parks Canada.

Aboriginal-Specific Funding Programs

- In recent years, Government has introduced a number of funding programs targeting Aboriginal people, for which the Innu are eligible. These include:
 - Budget 2008 included \$200,000 for EDU to pilot a skilled trades program targeted at aboriginal people (source of funding for LAMP).
 - Under the Violence Prevention Initiative, WPO provides \$200,000 annually in grants to address violence in Aboriginal communities.
 - LAA provides \$100,000 annually under the Suicide and Detrimental Lifestyles Prevention grants program.
 - TCR maintains an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage grants program (\$100,000 in Budget 2008, \$50,000 annually thereafter).
- Government has also funded a number of new positions focused on Aboriginal issues, including at LAA, HCS, and WPO.

Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy

- The Province continues to work cooperatively with the federal government, the Innu Band Councils and Innu Nation to assist with the development of long-term healing strategies.

Education and Training

- On February 11, 2010, the provincial and federal governments, Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, NunatuKavut Community Council and Nalcor Energy - Lower Churchill Project, announced they will contribute \$30 million to provide Aboriginal people in Labrador with increased employment opportunities associated with major economic development activities such as the Lower Churchill Project. The result of the partnership is the establishment of the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership. \$15 million is from the Government of Canada's Aboriginal Skills Employment Partnership (ASEP) program. Nalcor is providing an estimated \$7.3M in cash and nearly \$1.0M in-kind, while EDU is providing an estimated \$600,000 in cash and \$5.6M (through the College of the North Atlantic) in-kind. Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation and NunatuKavut are providing the balance from federal funds set aside under their Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements (AHRDAs).
- In the Fall 2004, Dr. David Philpott, of Memorial University, released his initial report on the educational needs of Innu children. The Province committed to work with the Innu and the federal government to begin addressing the issues identified by Dr. Philpott and to prepare for the devolution of the schools to the Innu, which was achieved prior to the 2009-10 school year. This included hiring consultants for Aboriginal Education and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Funding was also provided to locate two social workers in Peenamin McKenzie School in Sheshatshiu; for home/school liaison workers for both communities and to introduce a breakfast/lunch program in Peenamin McKenzie School.

- On February 3, 2009, it was announced that a partnership between EDU and Innu Nation had resulted in a social studies curriculum and resources specifically designed for Innu Kindergarten students.
- NL provided a \$4 million contribution towards the construction of a new school in Sheshatshiu, which opened in Fall 2009.

Justice Services

- Since 2003, Government has increased the number of RCMP positions in Labrador, including in the Innu communities. There is a new detachment in Sheshatshiu.
- Budget 2009 included \$206,000 to pilot an Innu Healing Path Program. This program offers an opportunity to deliver a more holistic and culturally responsive service to the Innu involved in the criminal justice system through a treatment program. The treatment program is designed to address the underlying causes of the criminal behaviour. The Innu Nation is a partner in this pilot.
- The Department of Justice has worked with the Innu Nation on assessing the feasibility of a Gladue (aboriginal) Court that will provide culturally appropriate service to the Innu.
- JUS has also invested in a variety of enhancements to the Justice system in Labrador which improve access for Labrador residents including the Innu, such as enhanced video-conferencing, continuation of a federal/provincial Aboriginal Court Worker Program, increased staff positions to support justice initiatives in Labrador, improvements to the legal aid system, and work to improve access to Innu-aimun (and Inuttitut) interpretation services in the justice system. An Aboriginal Justice Symposium was held in March 2008 to promote dialogue between Aboriginal people and the justice system.

Child, Youth and Family Services

- In response to the Health Labrador Corporation Operational Review, Government increased the number of Social Worker positions in Labrador, including those serving the Innu communities. Staff resources, including supports to social workers, were enhanced throughout the Province in the wake of the Turner Review.
- A new Director position was created within the Labrador-Grenfell area to be responsible for Child, Youth and Family Services in the Innu communities.
- Government continues to participate in discussions on devolution on Child, Youth and Family Services to the Innu while consulting the Innu and others on the Labrador service delivery model for the program under the new Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

Health and Community Services

- The Province continues to fund the operation of the health clinic in Natuashish despite the fact Health Canada funds such services on numerous isolated reserves elsewhere in the country.
- In Budget 2005 it was announced government would provide \$70,000 to reopen the Shushepishpan Group Home in Sheshatshiu.
- The number of diabetics in the Innu population, particularly in Sheshatshiu, is rising at an alarming rate and is severely impacting Aboriginal families. Budget 2010 includes \$300,000 to

hire diabetic education staff in the Innu communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, as well as other areas of Labrador and the Great Northern Peninsula.

- The Province supports working with the federal government and Aboriginal people on better integration and service delivery models for health services. The combined funding resources of the Province, federal government and the Aboriginal groups should contribute to a better health delivery model and should avoid duplication of services. The federal Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF) is being used to help improve the integration of federal and provincial health services, improve access to health services, make available health programs and services that are better suited to Aboriginal people and increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the design, delivery and evaluation of health programs and services.

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Ministerial Approval: Received from Minister Pottle

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