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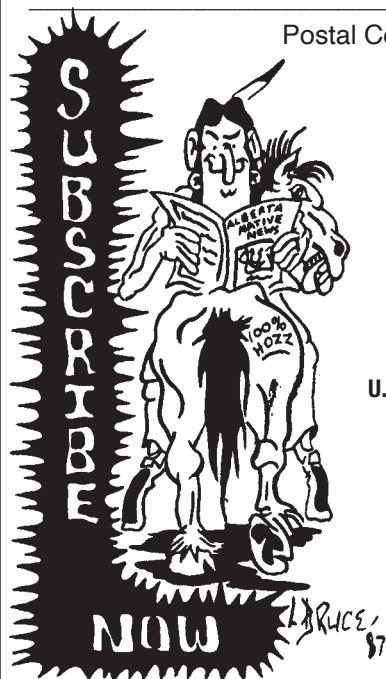
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# Alberta Treaty Nations slam feds over Clean Water Act

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Chiefs from Treaty First Nations in Alberta met with the minister of Indigenous Services Canada to reiterate their concerns with the First Nations Clean Water Act a week after government lawyers argued in court that their client has no legal obligation to provide First Nations with drinkable water.

The act, known also as Bill C-61, completed its second reading on June 5, and is in the process of being studied by the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

The legislation, according to Indigenous Services Canada, establishes “minimum national standards for the delivery of drinking water and wastewater services on First Nation lands,” and commits the feds to make “best efforts to provide adequate and sustainable funding [emphasis added]” to uphold these standards.

Upon the bill’s December 2023 introduction, the chiefs of 47 First Nations from Treaties 6, 7 and 8 revealed that they weren’t consulted on the legislation, nor had Minister of Indigenous Services Patty Hajdu responded to their requests for a meeting to express their concerns.

Since then, Hajdu has met with the Chiefs Steering Committee on Technical Services, which deals with the technical side of water, wastewater and related infrastructure for First Nations in Alberta, three times.

“Nothing much changes with every meeting,” Chief Rupert Meneen of Tallcree Tribal Government in Treaty 8 told *ANNews*.

Chief Meneen called the legislation a “dump-and-run” scheme, in which the federal government offloads the burden of responsibility onto First Nations for ensuring their water infrastructure is able to produce safe drinking water.

He said the Treaty chiefs’ primary concern with how the bill was conceived is that the government consulted with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), which is an advocacy body that isn’t itself signatory to any Treaty, to establish “manufactured consent” for the bill among Treaty First Nations.

Chief Meneen said the gap between the AFN’s advocacy efforts and the will of its Treaty-holding membership were on full display at the special chiefs assembly in Calgary from Oct. 16 to 18, in which 64 per cent of its membership voted down a child welfare reform agreement the AFN leadership had urged them to support.

Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, which represents more than half of First Nations in Alberta, quit the AFN in 2022 so it could negotiate with the federal government directly, as intended under the Treaty.

“If something is going to work, the Treaty people need to be at the table. The Treaty people need to have a voice,” said Meneen.

While Minister Hajdu made no specific commitments towards changing the legislation itself, she did agree to form a Treaty Bilateral Table on Water with Treaty Chiefs in the Alberta

Region to discuss ongoing water issues.

At an Oct. 10 standing committee meeting on Bill C-61, Hajdu repeated her claim that the legislation was “co-developed” with First Nations. “At the beginning of this, we had a very different definition... of what ‘co-development’ was, and by the end of it, I think we’ve learned that co-development starts a lot earlier than you would imagine,” she told committee.

Bill C-61’s origins are in a \$8-billion class action settlement reached in September 2021 with First Nations that were without clean drinking water for at least a year between Nov. 20, 1995 and June 20, 2021, in which the feds committed to repealing and replacing the old Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act.

The feds now face an additional \$1.1-billion class action suit from 60 First Nations, spearheaded by Shamattawa First Nation in northern Manitoba, which argues that the continued lack of clean water on reserves represents “an urgent human rights crisis.”

“Class members have been denied reliable access to safe drinking water, have been unable to adequately wash and care for themselves and their families, have suffered stunted economic growth, and have been prevented from engaging in their traditional ceremonies and spiritual practices,” Shamattawa’s September 2022 statement of claim reads.

The September 2021 settlement excludes reserves whose long-term water advisories began or continued after June 20, 2021, so the more recent class action “picks up where that one left off,” explained litigator Alana Robert, who is representing Shamattawa First Nation in court.

Chief Meneen credits the Shamattawa suit with helping “put Canada under a microscope” for its stated commitments to reconciliation.

In his successful 2015 election campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to lift all boil water advisories on First Nations reserves by 2020. At the time, there were 133 advisories in 93 communities. As of Oct. 9, 2024, there are 32 advisories in 30 communities.

But in response to the Shamattawa suit, the government’s lawyers are arguing that the government had no legal responsibility to do so.

“Canada does not owe the plaintiffs a general fiduciary duty as asserted to provide or fund water infrastructure on reserve,” government lawyers wrote in their statement of defence, filed on July 31, 2023.

Robert told *ANNews* that this argument exposes how the government sees its repeated commitments to ensuring reserves have clean water as a political gesture, rather than a legal obligation.

She said this doesn’t square with the federal government’s history of “playing a key role in constructing initial water infrastructure on

Continued on page 3

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## Bonnie's story: Empowering children, parents, and communities

Bonnie Rhoades' educational journey at Northern Lakes College is a remarkable story of dedication and community empowerment. Beginning her studies in the Teacher Assistant (TA) program (now known as the Educational Assistant program), Bonnie's passion for education and her commitment to her community laid the foundation for a remarkable career.

Returning to her home community of Loon River upon completing her program, Bonnie worked as a teacher's assistant, but was inspired by her own kindergarten teacher, Rosie Auger, and former school principals, Don Sinclair, Brian Dewar, and Connie Molcuk, to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree. Encouraged by her mentors, Bonnie enrolled in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP), a University of Alberta program facilitated by NLC.

Reflecting on her time at NLC, Bonnie fondly recalls the welcoming atmosphere and close friendships she formed with both students and staff. "Northern Lakes College felt like one big family," she shares. "Still, today, I will pop in and see my former teacher, Dr. Michelle Mitchell. Now she's Dean, [Health, Human Services, & University Studies] but she always makes time to chat and visit because she really cares about all of her students."

Bonnie also acknowledges the exceptional quality of education she received at NLC, particularly highlighting the dedication of her statistics instructor. "I was nervous when I started my statistics course," Bonnie admits. "But the teacher that taught it was so dedicated that she'd make time for group tutoring every Friday evening, and I fell in love with math. Even now, I love to teach students mathematics. It's kind of hard to believe!"

Upon graduating, Bonnie returned to her community to lead her own classrooms, viewing her students as her own children. "I wanted each one to be successful," she explains. "I'd do anything to help them, and I developed close relationships with their parents, as well. It was so reflective of the ATEP program; I was able to use my education to strengthen my own Indigenous community, to bring our children a sense of belonging, to keep our culture vital in our schools, to restore our community relationships."

Continuing her own educational journey, Bonnie pursued her master's degree while working as a teacher, authoring a thesis paper entitled, "Building Positive Relationships Within First Nation Schools." Upon completing her newest credential, Bonnie became the Principal of Little Buffalo school – a position she continues



### NLC alumni Bonnie Rhoades

to excel in – inspiring her students, family, and even her greater community to pursue advanced education.

Reflecting on her journey, Bonnie offers empowering advice to Indigenous women considering a return to higher education. "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today," she urges. "Believe in yourself and settle for nothing less than your very best. Expand your mind and your experiences. Don't ever quit."

Through her dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to education, Bonnie continues to inspire generations of Indigenous youth to dream big and pursue their aspirations.

*Northern Lakes College offers many programs through Supported Distance Learning. Get more information at [www.northernlakescollege.ca/programs-courses](http://www.northernlakescollege.ca/programs-courses)*

## Clean Water cont. from p 2

reserve when the reserve system was formed, and then playing an ongoing role in the funding of not only water infrastructure, but also the operation and maintenance of that water infrastructure.”

The government, Robert added, “elected to starve the funding of that water infrastructure, and the operation and maintenance of that infrastructure, over the course of several decades,” with First Nations “having a standard

of living that looks quite different than the rest of Canada” as a result.

NDP MP Niki Ashton, whose Churchill-Keewatinook Aski riding includes the Shamattawa First Nation reserve, also emphasized the historical context behind the "Third World living conditions" on the isolated First Nation, which in addition to a lack of potable water is plagued by a youth suicide epidemic and housing crisis.

"It's important for Canadians to know that

Shamattawa's living conditions didn't just happen, that they are a result of colonial approaches from the federal government. They are a result of systemic and continuous paternalistic policies and lack of necessary funding," Ashton told *Alberta Native News*.

Ashton said she was “surprised by the length to which the federal government lawyers have gone to discredit First Nations [and] to undermine political commitments made by the current federal government.”



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# MacEwan U values Indigenous lived experience in innovative staffing

By Regan Treewater-Lipes, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It is no secret that within academia, the valuable voices of Indigenous scholars are drastically underrepresented. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has noted that: “Post-secondary institutions have claimed for decades that they are committed to equity and diversity, but their principled stand still falls short.” According to CAUT, Indigenous faculty make up only 1.4% of the professorial workforce. Geographical complications exacerbate inequity for Indigenous communities as noted by Colleges and Institutes Canada’s 2024 citing of Statistics Canada’s 2023 report that found: “Adding to the complexity, Indigenous communities are disproportionately situated in rural and remote areas. In 2016, 26% of Indigenous individuals aged 19 to 45 lived in these regions, in stark contrast to just 3% of the non-Indigenous population.” This makes the leap of leaving home for university a monumentally intimidating prospect.

According to MacEwan University’s Associate Vice President of Indigenous Initiatives and Engagement, Terri Cardinal, there are inherent barriers that Indigenous scholars face when applying for academic positions. As an extension of these challenges, Indigenous university-hopefuls would certainly be more likely to feel empowered within academia, were they to see people like themselves represented within faculty, in fully integrated positions of achievement and respect.

Edmonton’s own, MacEwan University, is shattering this glass ceiling with a truly inclusive model for teaching excellence and meaningful student engagement. MacEwan’s student focused values and pursuit of teaching greatness have distinguished the institution as the ‘go to’ because of its smaller class sizes, and individualized support networks. More students are choosing MacEwan for their undergraduate journeys because they want an intellectually enriching experience where they will get the attention, personalized mentorship, and scholarly training they will need in the ‘real world.’

Part of this ‘real world’ practicality are the knowledge and skills directly transferrable to industry and professional careers: including an authentic ability to interpret one’s surroundings through non-Eurocentric lenses. This is why

MacEwan is so excited to be recruiting applicants for an innovative position: “The Department of Biological Sciences in the Faculty of Arts and Science, in partnership with kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre, invites applications for a full-time tenure-track appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor.” There are currently cross appointments with kihêw waciston from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Anthropology), Faculty of Business, Faculty of Fine Arts, and the Faculty of Health and Community Studies, following a successful pilot cross-appointment program three years ago. When asked about how the original idea for cross-appointed positions was born, Cardinal noted that the cross-appointment is something specific to MacEwan.

In a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*, Department of Biological Sciences Chair, Professor Kimberley Harcombe, elaborated that this innovative opportunity will have potential benefits for anyone in the biological and environmental sciences.

“We have consulted with an Elder through kihêw waciston previously about how we can understand and incorporate Indigenous perspectives and approaches into our interactions with nature,” she explained. “But this appointment would do so much more.” According to the public posting: “Within the Department of Biological Sciences, both during the cross-appointment and after, this person would contribute to our collective pedagogical expertise through lived First Nations, Metis, or Inuit experiences to course development and student outreach. On top of this they would also enhance our community-based scholarly activity working collaboratively to contribute service to the University and the broader community.”

The position would be split between these responsibilities in the Department of Biological Sciences, and student engagement and mentorship at kihêw waciston. “The research component might not be traditional lab work, but potentially, depending on the expertise of the successful applicant, some kind of field work supervision of student projects.” Terri Cardinal noted that: “Specifically with the biology cross-appointment position, it’s really looking at Indigenous perspectives to science. Our Indigenous people are scientists, our ancestors were scientists. We know the concepts and have the practical knowledge of the scientific realm, but the language that we use is different.”

“We want to attract candidates with lived experience and knowledge, and we can’t approach this from the traditional Eurocentric



The kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre at MacEwan U in Edmonton. Photo supplied.

perspective. This would reinforce barriers when the entire objective is to remove obstacles,” explained Harcombe.

The position is tenure-track, meaning that the successful candidate will have job-security, and the ability to rise through the ranks at a premier Alberta institution of higher learning. Since transitioning from a college to a university, MacEwan has often, but not always, advertised for professorial applicants to have a PhD in hand as a requirement for tenure-track positions.

“We reconsidered this when envisioning this position because a person with an MSc can easily have that valuable wealth of lived experience and knowledge from working directly with the land and nature in their community, and this is the expertise we need. Requiring everyone to have a PhD is a barrier that doesn’t need to be there,” Harcombe reiterated. The posting asks that applicants hold either a Master’s or PhD in biological or environmental studies. “We were careful not to be too narrow in our description of the position because we want to welcome science educators that come from different lived perspectives of biological and environmental Indigenous learning to find the best fit of our department and kihêw waciston.”

Cardinal emphasized that although it is about providing opportunities for Indigenous perspectives within academia, she and her team are also focused on properly supporting the successful applicant. “One of the things we recognize within cross-appointments and within Indigenous worldviews and prospectives is that Indigenous folks like to be connected to community: so, we need be asking how are we delivering support for new professors? How are we ensuring that we provide the Indigenous connection within this setting of a big academic institution, and how do we make sure that we are connecting to community as well? Many of us as

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# Indigenous leaders receive King Charles III medals

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On October 17, 2024, Alberta Senator Patti LaBoucane-Benson presented the King Charles III Coronation Medals at a presentation ceremony in the River Cree Resort & Casino at Enoch Cree Nation. The recipients were celebrated for their work that has resulted in better services, healthier children, more prosperous families, and stronger and more resilient communities. Dr. Tyler White of Siksika First Nation was one of the eleven recipients honoured with a medal.

In Canada, the King Charles III Coronation Medal was introduced as a commemorative honour to recognize 30,000 individuals who have made significant contributions to their communities, region, province, country, or abroad that brings credit to Canada. This medal was announced following the King’s coronation on May 6, 2023. Eligibility is based on notable achievements or contributions that reflect Canadian values, such as service, environmental advocacy, and diversity, and recipients must have been alive on the coronation date. Nominees are chosen through national and local organizations, which include community and cultural groups, professional associations, and regional partners.

Dr. Tyler White, also known as Holy Eagle Shield - Natoyiipiitawotaan, was honoured for his more than twenty-five years of service as a Chief Executive Officer for the Siksika Health Services and his work as the Chair of the First Nations Health Consortium. Dr. White worked extensively with all levels of government, frontline workers, and industry partners to enhance the coordination of health care and service delivery in Treaty 7 and beyond.

At the ceremony, Senator LaBoucane-Benson highlighted Dr. White’s achievements. She stated “Tyler’s leadership resulted in the federal and Alberta governments and the Chiefs of the eleven First Nations from Treaty 6, 7, and 8 signing a

memorandum of understanding that would ensure First Nations children receive culturally appropriate health care without delays in deciding which level of government pays for the service. This was the first such agreement of all of Canada and that was due to Tyler’s hard work and determination. Tyler, your work to ensure children receive the best possible health care is inspirational.”

Dr. White was honoured to accept his award and shared that he was humbled to be recognized with the other recipients, who were real superstars, giants and icons. He shared that he looked up to all of them deeply. Dr. White stated, “I enjoyed every bit of my work and all the other things that came with it, all the relationships, the friendships, the hard work, blood sweat and tears, so I humbly accept this award on behalf of my family but also the community that I serve, Siksika.

The medal itself, designed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority and manufactured by the Royal Canadian Mint, includes a crowned portrait of King Charles III on one side and his royal cypher on the reverse, accompanied by symbols representing Canada. The ribbon mirrors the United Kingdom’s Coronation Medal colours with dark blue, bright red, and white stripes.

Dr. White offered words of encouragement to everyone as he closed his speech, “I think about our people back home, I think about our brothers

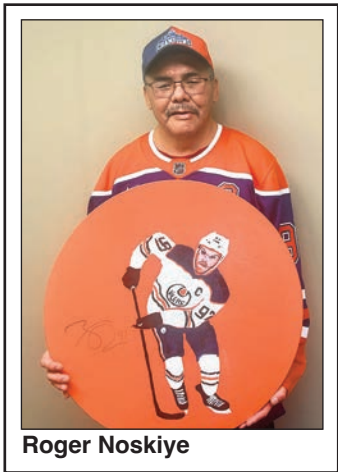
and sisters in Alberta and across the country, and I just want to encourage you to keep fighting for those that can’t fight, for those ancestors that have passed on, it’s important that you keep going, keep supporting one another and lift each other up.”

The other ten exceptional people who were honoured at the event included Brenda Blyan - member of the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, Pearl Calahasen - Cree from Northern Alberta, Frieda Hook – long term educator, Clayton Kootenay – member of Alexander First Nation, Chief Billy-Joe Laboucan - currently Chief of Lubicon Lake Band, Kathleen Laboucan - Residential School Survivor, Bernie Makokis - member of the Saddle Lake First Nations, Dr. Kisha Supernant - Métis/Papaschase/British Professor at the University of Alberta, Dr. Dave Tuccaro - member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Chief Charles Weaselhead - member of the Blood Indian Reserve and former Head Chief of the Kainai Blood Tribe Nation and Treaty 7 Grand Chief.



Recipients of the King Charles III Coronation Medal at River Cree Resort with Senator Patti LaBoucane-Benson. Photo by Kinnukana.

## Our cover artist Roger Noskiye



Roger Noskiye

The spiritual image on the cover of this month’s Alberta Native News is by Roger Noskiye, a talented Indigenous artist from the Whitefish Lake First Nation at Atikameg in northern Alberta. He was in Edmonton earlier this month to

attend the Edmonton Oilers hockey game during their Indigenous Celebration Night. The Oilers had special guests in attendance to recognize and celebrate the culture, history, leadership and talent of Indigenous Peoples and communities during the matchup with the Vegas Golden Knights. Noskiye painted a beautiful portrait of Oilers captain Connor McDavid to mark the occasion and he displayed it proudly at the game.

Roger started drawing and whittling as a child and his art was encouraged at the Northland Elementary School in Atikameg. He says he ‘drew his way through middle school’ and carried on with his schooling at Grande Prairie Regional College where he finished a visual arts program.

Roger’s life took a sudden turn in 1984 when his mother was tragically killed in a plane crash. He was the eldest of his 13 brothers and sisters

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The Woods Experience

# Come walk with us.





# Youth leaders urge Canada to prioritize health and education

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Indigenous Reporter

The Senate Standing Committee on Indigenous Peoples heard testimony on Oct. 30 from young Indigenous leaders representing communities from British Columbia to Nova Scotia.

Participants were aged 18 to 35 and selected based on the leadership role they've taken "in driving meaningful change in their communities," explained committee chair Sen. Brian Francis of Prince Edward Island, who is the former chief of Abegweit First Nation.

Bradley Bacon, an Innu translator from Unamen-Shipu, Que., brought his daughter with him to the hearing. He expressed concern about "rising individualism" in his community leading to a loss of Inuit values.

"Every time I talk about it, I get emotional. It hurts me. Respect doesn't exist anymore," Bacon told the committee.

Sen. Judy White of Newfoundland, who is Mi'kmaq, asked Bacon to elaborate on the perils of excessive individualism.

Bacon recalled how in February 2022, his uncle froze to death after spending three hours outside by himself. "That's why I'm afraid that individualism is taking over," he said.

Bacon added that he doesn't think what happened to his uncle would have occurred in a previous age, because neighbours would have gotten in touch to let him know his relative was outside in the cold.

"I want these values to come back," he said.

Faithe McGuire, a photographer and filmmaker from Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement in northern Alberta, told the committee that growing up on a Métis settlement gave her a "place in the world."

She said her father used to take her to "museums, junkyards and graveyards" and explain the history behind various objects, which instilled in her the "curiosity to begin my own journey of storytelling."

In 2021, she enrolled in two Indigenous-oriented programs that were immensely helpful for her career path—the Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass and Reach for the Sky Métis Women's Leadership course.

"The knowledge empowered me to understand the feelings of shame and insignificance I have felt was something that could be overcome," said McGuire.

Through her art, she hopes to cultivate "an urgency for all Métis and Indigenous people to take part in the documentation of these historic times."

"There are stories from our people that are still waiting to be heard," McGuire added.

Crystal Starr Lewis, a British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Youth Representative from Squamish Nation, described the painful decision she made as a nine-year-old to cut ties with her mother, who was a sex worker on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside suffering from drug addiction.

"When I was younger, I held a lot of resentment towards my mother, but as I got older, and when I turned 16, what allowed me to forgive and let go was realizing that if things had been different, I wouldn't be who I am today," she said.

Between 2008 and 2013, she lost her mother, brother and sister to fentanyl overdoses.

Starr Lewis's advocacy has taken her to the international stage, where she's spoken to the UN about the need for free anti-human

trafficking training in Indigenous communities and broader "cultural safety training," as well as preventable action to protect Indigenous youth in care from being taken to multiple foster homes.

She told the committee she told the UN "it's time" for Indigenous Peoples across the world to build their own UN-like organization.

"By standing together and working collectively together in unity to address the issues within our Indigenous communities, and by helping one another, looking out for one another, building together in solidarity, without borders and without division, together we can collectively pave the way forward as one entity and as our own self-determined system in alliance with the United Nations," explained Starr Lewis.

Justin Langen, a Métis youth advocate from Swan River, Man., who leads the non-profit O'KANATA, described his appearance before the committee as a "testament to the sacrifices of my ancestors, who fought to preserve our culture, our rights and our place in this land we call Canada."

"Too often, discussions about reconciliation focus solely on acknowledgement of the past. While this is necessary, it is not enough," said Langen.

"True reconciliation requires action, a commitment to dismantling the barriers that have held our communities back and building a future that uplifts our voices, our traditions and our contributions to Canada's social fabric."

From working with his non-profit, he's seen how access to education, mental health supports and traditional knowledge "can transform lives."

"Yet many of these opportunities remain inaccessible due to systemic barriers, neglect and lack of a genuine commitment from those in positions of power," he said.

One way to overcome these barriers, Langen said, is for Indigenous youth to have a seat at the table, where they're welcomed as a "powerful driving force for change."

"We are not just the future, we are the present," he noted.

Brett Recollet, a Two-Spirit Anishinaabe Indigenous support worker from Whitefish River First Nation on Manitoulin Island in northeastern Ontario, spoke about education.

"I am not here to advocate for the division between Western and Indigenous education. Instead, I believe in integrating both approaches to enrich our understanding," Recollet said.

He noted a "clear gap in how Indigenous knowledge and history are represented, not only in K-12 education but also in post-secondary programs."

While Indigenous-oriented courses and programming are widely available at many schools, Recollet said "it is imperative that all students, regardless of their field, are provided with foundational knowledge on Treaties, residential schools and Indigenous history."

"Nurses, lawyers, teachers, dentists, geologists and more are all professionals. At some point in their careers, [they] will be engaged with Indigenous communities," he said. "How will they do so respectfully and effectively if they are not exposed to this critical education during their training?"

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #62 calls on all levels of government to work with Indigenous leaders to "[m]ake age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada" a mandatory requirement in K-12 education.

Recollet called this Call to Action "vital," but noted its "implementation remains inconsistent."

He said he's seen from experience that many non-Indigenous educators are afraid to bring these topics up in class out of fear that they might



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MacEwan U cont. from p 4

academics are very much siloed and at kihêw waciston our work is outward looking.”

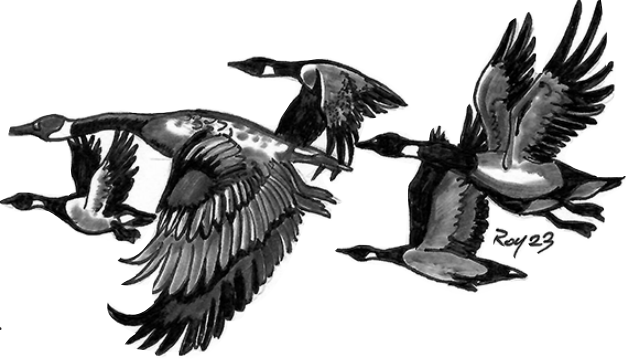
This is a novel concept in cross-appointments. A partnership between kihêw waciston and the laboratory sciences might seem strange at first; Harcombe reiterated Cardinal’s sentiments: “In biology we study life and what is living and growing around us. Indigenous communities have generations of gathered knowledge and learning about how to properly observe and interact with nature. Teaching MacEwan students how to engage with the natural world responsibly and from non-Eurocentric traditions will be incredibly beneficial to them professionally, but also for their personal enrichment. This will enhance the curriculum we are able to offer students tremendously.”

Harcombe did make sure to note that in no way would there be an expectation that the successful candidate act as an authority on all things Indigenous. “That would be a ridiculous ask,” she stated emphatically. Cardinal elaborated that: “The cross-appointments are also about providing support for professionals coming into the university. Often what happens is that we have Indigenous professors coming into faculties, and they’re the only Indigenous soul, the only Indigenous person there, and they’re pulled into every committee, they’re consulted on everything Indigenous, and then they must do a lot more work in their role as an Indigenous person. kihêw waciston provides additional support and resources so it’s not overwhelming, because ideally, we want to retain Indigenous profs when they come to MacEwan.” Through kihêw waciston there are collaborative opportunities between the cross-appointed professors, and no end to the growing sense of community and collaboration. Referencing a rising student

population of approximately 1,100 Indigenous pupils at present, Cardinal added: “We are not only focused on engaging with Indigenous students, but we invite the public in here as well. We want the community in to view our space to ensure that we are creating relationships: fostering a sense of connection and belonging.”

The successful candidate would ultimately be instrumental in pioneering new and inspiring curriculum development informed by Indigenous teachings and the richness of generations of partnership with Mother Earth. MacEwan University has already enjoyed the valuable contributions from other cross-appointed professors, and now the Department of Biological Sciences eagerly awaits the chance to welcome a new member to their vibrant team. Interested biological and environmental scientists with lived Indigenous knowledge and experiences should definitely consider applying for this outstanding position.

Detailed information can be found on the MacEwan University website: macewan.ca: Assistant Professor, Biology – MacEwan University. A review of applications will begin on November 18th and continue until a suitable candidate is found. Any questions



can be directed to Kimberley Harcombe: harcombek@macewan.ca.

Youth leaders cont. from p 6

say the wrong thing. “However, instead of avoiding the topic or relying on Indigenous staff to take on this burden, I encourage these educators to embrace discomfort. Growth happens when we step outside of what is comfortable,” said Recollet.



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### NOTICE FOR NON-INDIVIDUAL CLAIMANTS OF CLAIMS PROCEDURE AND CREDITORS’ MEETINGS

IN THE CCAA PROCEEDINGS OF:

**IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA LIMITED and IMPERIAL TOBACCO COMPANY LIMITED (together, “Imperial”); ROTHMANS, BENSON AND HEDGES INC. (“RBH”); and JTI-MACDONALD CORP. (“JTIM”)**

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR INDIVIDUAL CLAIMANTS:** Individuals who have suffered damages resulting from the use or consumption of Tobacco Products, including cigarettes, do not need to do anything at this time to preserve their rights. If the CCAA Plans are approved, separate claims processes will commence at a later date for individuals to file claims for compensation. Accordingly, this notice is solely for non-Individual Claimants.

All capitalized terms in this notice have the meanings ascribed to them in the CCAA Plans, which can be found on the Monitors’ Websites, links for which are provided at the end of this notice. A more detailed version of this notice is also available on the Monitors’ Websites.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on October 17, 2024, the Court-Appointed Mediator in the CCAA Proceedings of Imperial, RBH and JTIM (the “**Tobacco Companies**”), together with the Monitors of the Tobacco Companies, filed a CCAA Plan in respect of each Tobacco Company.

**PLEASE ALSO TAKE NOTICE** that on October 31, 2024, the CCAA Court issued (i) a Claims Procedure Order, which sets forth the process pursuant to which Claimants and Putative Miscellaneous Claimants, if any, may attend the Meetings and vote on the CCAA Plans; and (ii) a Meeting Order that, amongst other things, accepts the filing of the CCAA Plans and establishes the date and times of the Meetings of Affected Creditors to vote on such CCAA Plans.

**i) The CCAA Plans**

The CCAA Plans provide for the payment over time by the Tobacco Companies of a Global Settlement Amount of \$32.5 billion, which is to be allocated between the Claimants (and the Miscellaneous Claims Fund); namely, the Quebec Class Action Plaintiffs (QCAPs), Pan-Canadian Claimants (PCCs), *Knight* Class Action Plaintiffs, the Provinces and Territories, certain Tobacco Producers, as well as a public charitable foundation (Cy-près Foundation).

The CCAA Plans also provide, from the Global Settlement Amount, for the establishment of a Miscellaneous Claims Fund to provide potential distributions to Putative Miscellaneous Claimants, being Persons other than Claimants or Individual Claimants, who purport to have a Miscellaneous Claim against one or more of the Tobacco Companies.

**ii) The Claims Procedure**

The Claims Procedure Order sets forth the process pursuant to which (i) Claimants and (ii) Putative Miscellaneous Claimants, if any, may attend and vote at the Meetings. It provides that:

- Each Claimant shall be issued a Statement of Negative Notice Claim. Unless the statement is varied in accordance with the Claims Procedure Order, the Claimant shall be entitled to vote at the Meetings based on the value and number of votes set forth in the statement; and
- All Persons asserting a Miscellaneous Claim for the purpose of attending the Meetings and voting on the CCAA Plans must file a Miscellaneous Claimant Proof of Claim with the Monitor by no later than 5pm (Eastern Time) on December 5, 2024 (the Miscellaneous Claims Bar Date). The Claims Package for such Persons is available on each of the Monitors’ Websites.

**Please note that Individual Claimants are not required to take any actions at this time to preserve their rights.**

Please note that the value of an Affected Claim as set forth in a Statement of Negative Notice or in a Miscellaneous Claimant Proof of Claim is for voting purposes only. All entitlements to distributions from the Global Settlement Amount shall be in accordance with the CCAA Plans.

**iii) The Meeting Order**

The Meetings to vote on the CCAA Plans shall be held by videoconference as follows:

Tobacco Company	Meeting Date and Time
Imperial	December 12, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.
RBH	December 12, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.
JTIM	December 12, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Please note that all Individual Claimants (or groups of Individual Claimants) will be represented at the Meetings by either the Quebec Class Counsel or the PCC Representative Counsel. **Accordingly, Individual Claimants may not file a Miscellaneous Claimant Proof of Claim, attend the Meetings, nor vote on their own behalf.**

**iv) Monitors’ Contact Information**

For further information, please consult the Monitors’ Websites or contact them at:

Tobacco Company	Monitor’s Contact Details
Imperial	FTI Consulting Canada Inc. Website: <a href="http://cfcanada.fticonsulting.com/imperialtobacco">http://cfcanada.fticonsulting.com/imperialtobacco</a> Phone Number: 1-844-707-7558 Email Address: <a href="mailto:imperialtobacco@fticonsulting.com">imperialtobacco@fticonsulting.com</a>
RBH	Ernst & Young Inc. Website: <a href="http://www.ey.com/ca/rbh">www.ey.com/ca/rbh</a> Phone Number: 1-866-943-2280 Email Address: <a href="mailto:rbh@ca.ey.com">rbh@ca.ey.com</a>
JTIM	Deloitte Restructuring Inc. Website: <a href="http://www.insolvencies.deloitte.ca/en-ca/JTIM">www.insolvencies.deloitte.ca/en-ca/JTIM</a> Phone Number: 1-833-765-1452 Email Address: <a href="mailto:jtim@deloitte.ca">jtim@deloitte.ca</a>



# A tribute to Murray Sinclair – a champion of Indigenous rights

By ANNews Staff

His Honour, Murray Sinclair, a former senator and judge, and the chief commissioner of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission passed away on Monday, Nov. 4 in Winnipeg following a period of illness. He was 73.

He was one of the most important leaders in Canadian History and will be missed across the country as a judicial visionary and a voice of reason in advancing rights for Indigenous people.

Tributes celebrating his outstanding character and contributions were received from far and wide.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated, "Mr. Sinclair leaves behind an extraordinary legacy. With his passing, Canada has lost a giant – a brilliant legal mind, a champion of Indigenous rights, and a trusted leader on our journey of reconciliation."

"An Anishinaabe and member of the Peguis First Nation, Mr. Sinclair dedicated his life to repairing and reshaping Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. His Ojibway name, Mizanay Gheezhik, means 'The One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky', and this beautifully reflected his vision for a brighter, stronger future for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

"A lawyer by profession, Mr. Sinclair became the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba and just the second in Canada. Among his many accomplishments, he will be remembered for his service as the Chief Commissioner of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), where he led efforts to address the lasting and painful impact of the residential school system on Indigenous communities.

"After years of investigative efforts under Mr. Sinclair's leadership, the TRC's report, including its 94 Calls to Action, gave a voice to Survivors which will always be reflected in its pages and part of our country's history. To this day, the report guides our collective journey toward a fairer, more equitable future with Indigenous Peoples. It would not have been possible without Mr. Sinclair's critical work and guidance."

Murray Sinclair served as Chancellor of Queen's University from 2021-2024 and was the first Indigenous person to serve in the role. He brought many years of leadership experience in governance and law, most notably through his

service as a justice to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, his role as Chief Commissioner of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and as a Senator in the Senate of Canada. In recent years he served as General Counsel with Cochrane Saxberg LLP, Manitoba's largest Indigenous law firm. Over the course of his career, he received honorary doctorates from 14 universities, including Queen's in 2019.

Queens University offered this tribute: "As one of Canada's most significant advocates for Indigenous people, his unwavering commitment to the principles of equity and inclusion transformed the country's political landscape for the better. Similarly, while at Queen's, his expertise and care significantly contributed to the university's ongoing evolution as an institution.

"He played a pivotal role in advancing truth and reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization on campus. For example, His Honour helped facilitate critical advances on reviewing university practices, policies, and procedures, and he lent his keen and thoughtful wisdom to priority initiatives such as the university's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation activities.

"Queen's was uniquely honoured when Chancellor Sinclair agreed to take on the position, and we have benefited enormously from his wisdom and commitment. He understood the key role institutions like ours can and must play in the process of reconciliation," says Principal Deane.

"We will miss him for that, as well as for his wonderful personal warmth and good humour. He was a great man, fiercely principled yet profoundly humane."

Broadcast journalist Shelagh Rogers succeeded Sinclair as Chancellor and began her term in July 2024.

"We have lost a visionary leader who acted out of wisdom, his deep humanity and love. Chancellor Emeritus Sinclair gave us the opportunity to learn the truth, and as importantly, to unlearn the foundational myths at the heart of the history of Canada," says Chancellor Rogers. "He calls us still to change the world and to make it better for each new generation, aligning with the raison d'être of our university. The best way to honour him is to continue his essential work."



His Honour Murray Sinclair was a champion for Indigenous Rights.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), extended their deepest condolences to the family and friends of His Honour, Murray Sinclair.

They wrote, "His Honour's passing leaves a gaping hole in our hearts and in the fabric of our nation — we are heartbroken.

"Murray Sinclair's unwavering commitment to truth and reconciliation in Canada is unparalleled. As a lawyer, judge and Senator, he fought tirelessly for the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. He was forever the mediator and negotiator who owned a powerful voice as one of the most prolific leaders in this land.

"As Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), he helped amplify the truths of Indian Residential School Survivors, allowing Canadians to confront this uncomfortable chapter of the nation's history. The TRC's Final Report and 94 Calls to Action are a roadmap for Canada to address the ongoing legacy of residential schools in the hopes of reconciliation.

"His Honour will forever hold a special place in the heart of the NCTR. A revered Elder, his work with Survivors laid the foundation for our very existence. We are grateful for his wisdom and counsel over the years, and we will eternally honour his memory as we continue our journey of educating Canadians of the ongoing impacts of residential schools, amplifying Survivors' voices, and advancing the truth of this country.

"Miigwetch to Creator for sending us Mizana

Continued on page 9



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# Interlocutor calls for reparations in final report on unmarked graves

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Canada’s special interlocutor for missing children and unmarked graves and burial sites associated with Indian Residential Schools has released the final report of her mandate, providing recommendations on how the government can honour the memory of the thousands of children who were killed at forced assimilation institutions.

Kimberley Murray was appointed special interlocutor in June 2022, a year after 215 suspected unmarked graves were uncovered at the site of the former Kamloops Residential School, which sparked a wave of similar findings from First Nations across Canada.

Murray’s task was to make recommendations on how to establish a “new legal framework and process to support search and recovery efforts, and to advance reconciliation in Canada,” the 285-page executive summary of her final report, released in full on Oct. 29 in two parts, reads.

Any such legislative framework, Murray noted, must be developed in compliance with Indigenous laws, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report proposes an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework to support the “search and recovery of the missing and disappeared children and unmarked burials,” and provides 42 recommendations for bringing it to fruition.

“The Reparations Framework is not a one-size-fits-all model; it is an inclusive, flexible framework that can be adapted and tailored to meet the specific needs of the Survivors, Indigenous families, and communities in diverse Indigenous Nations across the country,” Murray noted.

The special interlocutor emphasized that reparations are about more than just financial compensation. There are also important “material and symbolic reparations,” including repatriation of children, giving land back to Indigenous Peoples, formal apologies, rewriting Canadian history to include Indigenous perspectives, public education, commemoration and memorialization, and legal and policy reform.

This was the third report from the special interlocutor, following a November 2022 progress update report and a June 2023 interim report.

The final report reiterates Murray’s call from last year’s interim report to penalize residential school denialism, as defined by Indigenous Studies academics Daniel Heath Justice and Sean Carleton.

“Residential school denialism,” Justice and Carleton write, “is not the outright denial of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system’s existence, but rather the rejection or misrepresentation of basic facts about residential schooling to... obscure truth about Canada’s IRS system in ways that ultimately protect the status quo as well as guilty parties.”

A private member’s bill introduced in September by Winnipeg Centre NDP MP Leah Gazan, who has mixed Lakota, Chinese and Jewish ancestry, seeks to criminalize “condoning, denying, downplaying or justifying the Indian residential school system in Canada or by misrepresenting facts related to it.”

Murray expressed support for Gazan’s proposed legislation at an Oct. 31 news conference alongside the NDP legislator.

In her report, Murray also calls on the federal government to update its Act to enact the Online Harms Act, which is in the midst of its second reading in the House of Commons, “to address the harms associated with denialism about Indian Residential Schools, including the missing and disappeared children and unmarked burials.”

Stephanie Scott, executive director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), called Murray’s final report “a powerful tool to hold government and church bodies accountable today, and in the years to come” in an Oct. 29 statement from the NCTR.

The statement noted overlap between some of the special interlocutor’s recommendations and the NCTR’s ongoing actions.

The NCTR highlighted Murray’s recommendations for an immediate end to the destruction of any documents “that may contain information relating to the death of a child while in the care of Indian Residential Schools and other associated institutions,” updating federal access to information laws to assist First Nations in accessing relevant documents, ongoing funding for Indigenous-led investigations into missing children and unmarked burials, and ensuring trauma-informed health care is accessible to survivors, their families and impacted Indigenous communities.

While the primary purpose of the report was to provide recommendations to the government on how to proceed with care for survivors, it includes blistering criticisms of a system of “settler amnesty and impunity,” which has allowed perpetrators to evade justice.

Eugene Arcand, a member of the NCTR Survivors Circle, said he appreciates how Murray’s report “reminds us that the struggle isn’t over.”

“The report documents Canada’s deliberate distortion of international human

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rights law to avoid accountability for the crimes committed through the residential school system and related institutions,” he said in the aforementioned NCTR statement.

After receiving Murray’s final report, Minister of Justice Arif Virani issued a statement that expressed his “sincere hope” that the report and its recommendations “will honour the memory of the children who never returned home from residential schools and will lead to healing for families and Survivors,” but didn’t commit to implementing any of the special interlocutor’s recommendations.

“Kim Murray’s work has contributed significantly to telling and acknowledging the truth. There is still more to be learned, accepted and understood,” Virani said, vowing to “work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities to address the ongoing legacy of Indian Residential Schools in a way that respects their wishes and traditions.”

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### Murray Sinclair cont. from p 8

Giizhik (*The One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky*), a mishoomis who did so much for so many in his physical time on Earth. His invaluable contributions have left an enduring legacy that will continue to guide and inspire future generations towards a more just and equitable society.”

Sinclair’s memoir – *Who We Are: Four Questions For a Life and a Nation* – was released in September 2024. In it, he continued to challenge Canadians to take action.

“We know that making things better will not happen overnight. It will take generations. That’s how the damage was created and that’s how the damage will be fixed,” Sinclair wrote.

“But if we agree on the objective of reconciliation, and agree to work together, the work we do today will immeasurably strengthen the social fabric of Canada tomorrow.”



# Chelsee-Marie Pettit shares her ᐱᐱᐢᐢ Aaniin journey

By John Wirth, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

ᐱᐱᐢᐢ Aaniin, a trailblazing Anishnaabe apparel and jewelry retailer, extends its business wisdom to their community. “My advice is just going out and do it, like, don't wait for the perfect idea. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity,” says Chelsee-Marie Pettit, founder and owner of the Toronto based company.

Launched in the summer of 2021, Aaniin offers both its own line of streetwear clothing as well as products made by 16 featured Indigenous artisans and a further 19 “coming soon.”

Introducing herself, Chelsee says, “I grew up in Sarnia, Ontario. I am a member of Aamjiwnaang First Nation. When I was about 18, I jumped around Ontario, lived in Ottawa, London, Ottawa and then I settled in Toronto just before starting the business.”

She envisioned her brand would foster familiarity and validation from Anishinaabemowin speakers and further spark an interest in others. Being interested in fashion from a young age Chelsee explains, “I wanted to be a fashion designer when I was 8 years old until I was like 20. And then after I dropped out of fashion school, I just never looked back.” Furthermore, Pettit reflects on the idea which set this business in motion.

“I was just walking in the street in downtown Toronto and thought I saw someone wearing Indigenous syllabics on their clothing. Right away, I just felt this sense of inclusion in the city that I just never felt before, and I just had so many questions, like what language was it in? What did it say? And obviously, where could I get? I walked closer to ask the person, and then as I walked out, I realized it was actually just a triangle.”

Cheslee wanted to make sure that her customers were informed about what they were wearing.

“When I was first coming up with a business idea, I was a little wary, putting Indigenous translations on shirts in case people wearing it don't understand what it says or exactly my thought process of the triangle story.”

Her solution? To add QR codes that are accessible through most smart phone cameras on demand. Pettit describes, “The QR codes at first

used to just go to a link on my website, just the homepage and now they all go to their own unique translation pages.”

Chelsee collaborates almost entirely with professional Indigenous models to display the products in her online store.

Aaniin strives to provide apparel that is ethically sourced “100% Cotton, 100% Sustainable, and 100% Made in ‘Canada’ bestselling Tkaronto Design.”

Chelsee enacts a reclamation of naming on the urban center of Toronto, back to its origin of Tkaronto. It means, “where the trees are standing in the water. Chelsee created [it to] show the trees as the Toronto skyline and the water reflection with the current city scape.”

She shares a behind the scenes look through the journey that has led to providing the apparel line. Initially she wrestled with a conflict: “I think it holds a lot of Indigenous people back because we want to do things sustainably, but because we want to do it sustainably, we don't want to impact the Earth in negative ways. At the same time, there's so much more impact that we can accomplish if we just get started with what we do have access to in front of us.

“You can always aim to make those big changes later – [like with] the whole fashion industry itself. The houses that are non-Indigenous, Canada based manufacturers, a lot of them still either buy products overseas and then ship it in and then they assemble the products in person. The biggest issue with sustainability in fashion is shipping.

“So right off the bat, I was like, well, I'm not going to pay like five times mark up just to get the same quality fabric as overseas. So, I started going to overseas. But that was after I built up my inventory and cash flow with blanks that I got from a local T-shirt company.”

Starting humbly and sourcing locally oftentimes does not result in successful start-up bottom lines, however it was always intentional to create a sustainable business model; both financially and ethically.

Chelsee’s business plan has been recognized by the Indigenous venture investment reality tv show “The Bear’s Lair,” which airs on APTN. She was featured in the third episode of its second season. Returning for the finale, she won the \$100,000 investment main prize and is the Champion of season 2!

Chelsee elaborated on her relationship with the payment card corporation: “MasterCard has been a great supporter for the last few years. I was a grant recipient for one of their women owned



Chelsee-Marie Pettit

business grants. Back almost two years exactly. I found out that I was one of the recipients of their purified by MasterCard Grant.”

She says that winning it, “was a really crazy experience” and a, “saving grace” amid battling the rising costs of operating in Toronto.

Pettit candidly shares: “I had two stores in December, but last November I closed my store. It was open for about a year and a half and it was bleeding money left, right and centre. It was very difficult to keep my head above water.”

Chelsee is proud to announce that, with the partnership of Mastercard Canada, “We’re about to do this giant, 6,500-square-foot-pop-up, right in downtown Toronto at The Cadillac Fairview, Eaton Centre.” it will be held over the Christmas shopping season at the “busiest mall” in eastern Canada, from the 29th of November through the entire month of December. Chelsee-Marie Pettit’s enterprise is bringing Indigenous culture to the holidays.

However, her sights are set on greater goals than just this season; Petit declares her intent for the event: “The @aaniin.hello POP UP is a final push to prove people want this to be a permanent business in the Canadian economy for the Indigenous community. I’m so excited to see my initial vision of my Indigenous department store come to fruition.”

She wants to “take everything I’ve done” and “streamline” her business and “three to five other businesses next year and hopefully more the year after.” She has goals to take what she has learned and eventually create an equity-based fund where every Indigenous community across Canada would have access to the profits that are generated by the companies it creates. This idea has its roots in her experience with the startup business.

“We don't really have where you call up other family members who might have money. And say, Can you give me like a \$20,000 line of credit? \$50,000 investment for my business?”

Chelsee addresses where she sees the greatest impact, “I really see it becoming available to communities across Canada, and I could work with the entrepreneurs that are on their reserves.”

Chelsee-Marie Pettit releases her public statements through the company’s official @aaniin.hello Instagram. She also provides news through their membership benefits, located at www.aaniin.shop.



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# Building mutual trust and respect matters.

Building relationships is a journey. We are committed to working with Indigenous communities to learn, grow and earn trust.

From open and honest dialogue to developing business agreements and equity partnerships, we're putting our energy into creating opportunities that create mutual benefit for years to come.

