

OUR COMMITMENT TO

Indigenous communities



Ready for Change
Ensemble pour le changement

Tom
Mulcair
NDP

A message from Tom

After decades of inaction in Ottawa, First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities have reached a tipping point.

There have been moments that encouraged hope and optimism: the day the Government of Canada issued its apology for the tragedy of residential schools, or the day the Shannen's Dream motion, sponsored by my caucus colleague Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay), was adopted by the House of Commons.

We thought maybe change was coming at last.

But as the years passed, there was no change. Too many empty promises have been made with little progress.

In the NDP, we believe not only that change is possible; we believe change is necessary. With a dedicated team including 22 Indigenous candidates running in this election, we are ready to make change happen.

I give you my personal commitment to change the relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

From coast to coast to coast, I have met with chiefs, elders and community members and heard the wisdom, the knowledge and the determination of the First Peoples to build their communities into thriving societies. The vision for healthy communities, quality housing, equitable funding for education, and better health care for First Nations, Inuit and Métis can be achieved with the NDP.

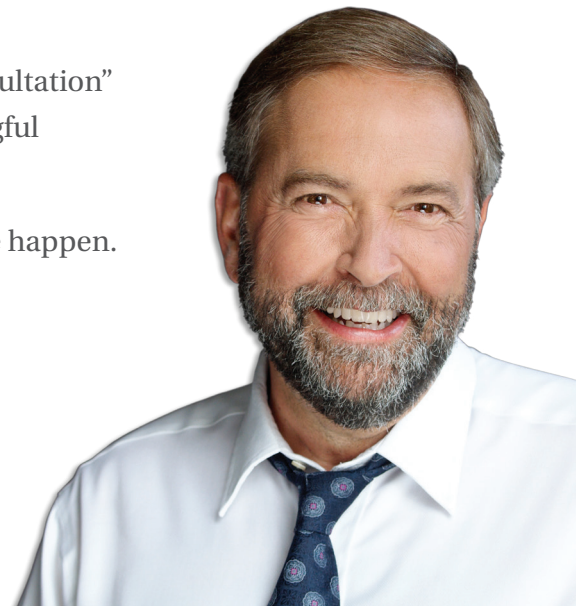
It is time for a new era that embraces a true Nation to Nation relationship that is built on respect and, above all, makes meaningful progress when it comes to bringing about change.

A new era means an understanding that “meaningful consultation” isn’t just a catchphrase – it’s the law. Without real, meaningful consultation, our country cannot move forward.

With your support, working together, we will make change happen.



Tom Mulcair
Leader of Canada's NDP



Establishing a Nation to Nation relationship

We will work on a Nation to Nation basis with Indigenous communities. After so many years of broken promises, it's time for a new era with a Prime Minister you can trust to be a respectful partner.

“

Reconciliation is about healing relationships, building trust and working out our differences. It means a meaningful commitment to change and to honesty, and engaging and rethinking relationships to create a future of peace, a future of justice and a future of renewed hope for all of us.”

Romeo Saganash, *Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou*

As Alberta Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, I saw Stephen Harper's Conservatives whittle away at our treaty rights. An NDP government will work with First Nations to undo the damage.”

Cameron Alexis, *Peace River—Westlock*

The truth is that Canada can afford both an inquiry into the 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and anti-violence services and programs. Canada can afford these things if we make them a priority. What we can't afford is for more Indigenous women to go missing or be murdered.”

Niki Ashton, *Churchill—Keewatinook Aski*

An NDP government will:

- Create a cabinet-level committee chaired by Tom Mulcair as Prime Minister to ensure that all government decisions respect treaty rights, inherent rights and Canada's international obligations.
- Implement the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Take action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations on a priority basis established in consultation with Indigenous communities, starting with a funding contribution of \$8 million over four years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Call a national inquiry into the 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in our first 100 days.
- Remove the punitive 2% funding cap on social transfers to Indigenous communities imposed by previous Liberal and Conservative governments, and establish a fair fiscal relationship to close the gap between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous Canadians.
- Repeal Bill C-51, which puts a chill on legitimate protest, and restore civil liberties in Canada.
- Fix our country's broken treaty process and deal with unresolved land claims.

Closing the education gap

We must not fail another generation. Secondary school graduation rates are 35% for First Nations students on-reserve, compared to 85% graduation rates for other Canadians. Inspired by the Shannen's Dream movement, we commit to closing the education gap to ensure that every Indigenous child gets the educational opportunities afforded to every other child in Canada.



As an Indigenous educator myself, I can't believe that in a country as rich as Canada, First Nation youth are more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school. We need to change that together with a joint process to address the education funding gap and new investment from an NDP government."

Aaron Paquette, *Edmonton Manning*

What I have learned from Indigenous youth is that education is not just about books and teachers. Education is a commitment to the future. Children in Indigenous communities deserve to have their dreams met with properly funded resources in classrooms that give them hope and pride."

Charlie Angus, *Timmins—James Bay*

An NDP government will:

- Work with First Nations through a meaningful collaborative process to develop new education policies and laws based on the principle of Indigenous self-government.
- Make a new investment in First Nations education of \$1.8 billion over the next four years to immediately begin the work of ensuring every Indigenous child gets the educational opportunities afforded to every other child in Canada.
- Continue this work with annual increases over the long term based on an escalator so that the increase to First Nations education amounts to \$4.8 billion over eight years.
- Provide skills training by working with Indigenous partners to renew and improve the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy and ensure its long-term sustainability.
- Work with provinces, territories and Indigenous communities to deliver a Canada-wide quality early childhood education and childcare program where parents pay no more than \$15 a day.
- Deliver \$250 million in additional investment to federal student grants, ramped up over four years, focusing on helping students who need it most, including Indigenous students.
- Immediately begin phasing out interest on federal student loans, eliminating it completely in seven years.

Strengthening Indigenous communities

It's time we had a government that spends more time working with Indigenous communities than fighting them in court. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities need a federal partner that will work with them as they establish their priorities. And we need to act on the reality that many Indigenous peoples are now making their homes in Canada's cities.



Indigenous communities – First Nations, Inuit and Métis – all have young populations. We have to make sure that we close the education gap in our communities and that we offer programs and services for the youth so they have a future in employment and contributing to the economy.”

Georgina Jolibois, *Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River*

An NDP government will:

- Support initiatives to revitalize Indigenous languages by establishing, in consultation with Indigenous communities, a National Indigenous Languages Revitalization Fund and a National Indigenous Languages Institute with a total new investment of \$68 million over four years.
- Implement Jordan's principle and commit to an equitable funding formula to address current funding inequities for child and family services.
- Work with local child services organizations to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.
- Work with Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous organizations to renew and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.
- Address the needs of urban First Nations, Inuit and Métis people with special attention to the appropriate development and the delivery of affordable housing, public health care, education and skills training, as well as the development of economic and employment opportunities.
- Work in partnership with First Nations towards developing a statutory framework recognizing First Nations Police Services as essential services.
- Support the development and implementation of community safety plans and restorative Indigenous justice systems.
- Ensure the full involvement of Indigenous communities in emergency prevention, management and mitigation agreements.
- Work with the provinces, human rights commissions and others to promote anti-racism education.

Addressing the housing crisis

The last time the Liberals were in power, they cancelled Canada's National Housing Strategy. Today, 300,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year. In First Nations communities, 37.3% of households require major repairs, 50% of First Nation adults report mould and mildew in their homes, and one in four adults are living in overcrowded housing or deteriorated units.



The unacceptable state of housing in Indigenous communities is a result of decades of neglect by previous federal governments. It's time to rebuild these communities and recognize housing as a basic right in this country.”

Deborah Chief, *Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman*

In my experience as band councillor, I can attest to the fact that many First Nations are facing housing shortages, and in our urban communities housing has moved out of the grasp of families and individuals. Instead of building bureaucracies like the Conservatives have done, we will work to get people into safe, affordable housing.”

Rex Isaac, *Lambton—Kent—Middlesex*

An NDP government will:

- Immediately address housing needs in remote communities by targeting \$100 million of critical infrastructure funding to double the number of new houses built and renovated on-reserve in the first year.
- Invest \$2.7 billion over four years in affordable housing and homelessness across Canada, including creating and strengthening housing agreements with Indigenous communities.
- Create local jobs, training and contracts for Indigenous businesses as part of housing and renovation projects.
- Implement sustainable development standards for housing construction, including the use of mould-free materials, energy-efficient building techniques and the use of locally harvested lumber.
- Work with First Nations to overhaul and restructure the First Nations Market Housing Fund to actually create more and better on-reserve housing.
- Provide \$500 million in incentives for the construction of affordable rental housing across Canada.
- Pass the *Affordable Housing Act* to recognize housing as a right.

Making health care a priority

Our government has backed away from its traditional role of providing leadership in health care. Meanwhile, demands on the system have increased and significant gaps remain in areas like mental health. Life expectancy for people living in First Nations communities is five to seven years less than other Canadians, tuberculosis rates are 31 times the national average, and suicide rates are five to seven times the national average.



The success and well-being of a community depends largely on the quality of health care services and how easy it is to access them. We will work with Indigenous communities and leadership to address the gap in health care.”

Carol Hughes, *Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing*

In the North we struggle with our health services. In my terms as band councillor and Chief, I have seen too often our women not being able to have their babies born in Fort Nelson, and our elders not being able to spend their final years here and having to leave their communities, homes and families. I’m proud to be part of the team that’s going to turn that around.”

Kathi Dickie, *Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies*

No Canadian should go hungry, but the Conservatives have left a large number of Northern fly-in communities out of the Nutrition North program. We will immediately include them and create equitable program eligibility criteria based on real circumstances and with sufficient funding.”

Dennis Bevington, *Northwest Territories*

An NDP government will:

- Work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to develop a plan to close the gap in health outcomes, and ensure quality and accessible health services for Indigenous communities.
- Invest in community-based health clinics, including the development of mobile clinics that improve access to health care providers in rural and remote locations.
- Create a new training and recruitment grant to help provinces hire more than 7,000 needed doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses, including recruitment grants to increase the number of health professionals in remote communities and the number of Indigenous doctors and nurses.
- Work with Indigenous communities and the provinces to improve urban Indigenous health outcomes with a new investment of \$120 million over four years.
- Invest in a \$100-million Mental Health Innovation Fund for Children and Youth, with an additional \$5 million per year for a suicide prevention strategy to serve at-risk populations, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

- Establish a \$30-million Palliative Care Innovation Fund, including culturally appropriate care for elders and others in Indigenous communities.
- Make prescription drugs accessible to all at little or no cost, and work with the provinces and territories to deliver a universal drug plan.
- Make federal health agencies like Health Canada and First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIBH) more responsive and accountable to Indigenous communities.
- Increase access to affordable and nutritious food in northern, isolated communities by investing \$32 million to fix and expand Nutrition North, and work with Indigenous communities and Northerners on culturally appropriate and sustainable solutions to food insecurity.
- Work with Indigenous communities on a National Diabetes Strategy with an initial investment of \$20 million over four years.

Growing a sustainable economy: jobs, infrastructure and environment

The drinking water systems of 39% of First Nations pose a “high risk” to health and safety. Better roads are needed for developing resources, getting products to market and getting to work. Many remote communities need to replace their dirty and expensive diesel generation with cleaner and cheaper green energy, and make their houses and buildings more energy efficient.



As a lifelong resident of Nunavut, I have seen first-hand the impact that climate change has on our lands. Instead of making climate adaptation a priority, the Conservative government has weakened environmental protection. It’s time for an NDP government that will show true leadership on this critical issue.”

Jack Anawak, *Nunavut*

As a small business owner in the hospitality and tourism sectors, I know how much it helps when the government has your back, and the NDP is doing just that with their plan to help small businesses.”

Trent Derrick, *Cariboo—Prince George*

An NDP government will:

- Improve critical infrastructure in Indigenous communities such as housing, schools, and clean water and sanitation facilities with \$375 million of new investment over four years.
- As part of the local infrastructure transfer, dedicate \$96 million more over four years and long-term funding of \$800 million over 20 years to support infrastructure projects for Indigenous communities.
- Work with Indigenous communities to ensure local jobs, training and contracts for Indigenous businesses are part of critical infrastructure projects, including allocating \$5 million in grants annually to Indigenous governments and municipalities to create 1,250 youth apprenticeships each year in federally funded local infrastructure projects.
- As part of our climate change plan, target \$100 million towards clean energy development in remote communities that are dependent on diesel flown in for electricity generation.
- Make Employment Insurance more fair and accessible by improving benefits for workers in seasonal industries and add five extra weeks of benefits in regions where unemployment is high and work is hard to come by.
- Reverse the dangerous damage done by Stephen Harper with omnibus budget bills C-38 and C-45 by putting teeth back into the environmental assessment process to protect our lakes and rivers.

- Uphold the Crown's duty to consult Indigenous peoples on decision-making that may impact them, consistent with the Canadian Constitution, legal obligations and the principle of free, prior and informed consent as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Work to establish revenue sharing frameworks for resource development projects that provide benefits for Indigenous communities through a consultative process, including Indigenous communities, provincial governments and territories.
- Support opportunities for Indigenous contractors and workers with investments in infrastructure, training and innovation.