

SFU Reconciliation Conference

Story

Vancouver
Friday, March 16, 2018 11:30
AM

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

We are gathered on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in today's conference.

We are at a unique moment in our history.

For the first time, governments in B.C. and Ottawa are aligned in their commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

With that alignment comes the chance for lasting change.

Reconciliation is a matter of rights, law and justice.

For too long, conversations like this one were ignored or delayed.

Or they were relegated to the courts.

Our government is taking a different approach.

We are committed to a government-to-government partnership, built on:

- Recognition of inherent rights
- Respect for Indigenous knowledge, experience and culture
- A commitment to reconciliation

As we start on this journey, there is a sense of optimism.

There is hope.

But there is also a sense of caution, even skepticism.

I get that.

Look at the past 150 years of our history.

We have to build trust.

We have to prove our government's commitment to the UN Declaration and the Calls to Action is more than just words.

We have a responsibility to apply these principles to achieve real and lasting change.

Our government is taking the first steps:

- With mandate letters to Ministers – this is a cross-government priority
- By recruiting more Indigenous people to work for government – from public servants to apprentices
- We are making new investments in:
 - Indigenous skills training
 - Indigenous languages
 - Indigenous housing and childcare
 - Help for the overdose crisis

Making things right isn't easy.

If it was, people would have already done it.

We have to show up, answer the tough questions, and do the work.

Our government has already faced some difficult decisions. And there will be more.

In tough times, we need to trust in the strength of our relationship, and our shared commitment to reconciliation.

Progress won't happen overnight.

It will take time.

Reconciliation is collaboration.

It is a process.

It is a journey we are on together.

Reconciliation does not begin or end at a single event, decision, or agreement.

It must last for generations. For our children and our grandchildren.

That partnership begins when we turn from words to action.

It begins when we recognize the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples

It begins when we realize government doesn't have all the answers. We have to find the way forward together.

I am honoured to be your Premier

And I am honoured to be a partner on this journey with you.