

**MÉTIS NATION**

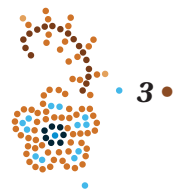


# WHAT WE HEARD

*Report of the Métis Nation's Engagement with  
Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors*



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## A Message from Métis National Council President, Clément Chartier

It is a significant time for the Métis Nation as we continue to seek justice for our people, including those whose lives have been so terribly impacted by the Sixties Scoop, an era which saw thousands of Indigenous children taken from their homes and placed with non-Indigenous families between the early 1950s and the early 1990s.

It has been a long and difficult journey for our Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors. In 2017, the Canadian federal government announced that it would settle numerous lawsuits related to the Sixties Scoop. Because these lawsuits were initiated by First Nations Survivors, the federal government reasoned that it did not need to consider or include Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in that settlement. While from a legal standpoint this decision may be justified, morally it is inexcusable and indeed, a travesty. Canada is no less culpable for the plight of Métis Survivors than it is for other Indigenous children and families who were so profoundly wronged by these abhorrent government policies and practices.

Since that time, our Métis Nation leadership and MNC staff have been working with Métis Nation Survivors to have their voices heard, their stories told, and their needs met. This *What We Heard Report* is the result of that substantial effort. It describes the first Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Symposium held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in October 2018, which provided a foundation and impetus for this important work, and highlights the findings of a series of engagement sessions held soon after with Métis Survivors from across the Homeland. We are now in the process of developing a registration database to connect Métis Survivors with the reconciliation process, and have created a dedicated portal to help Survivors with their information needs. The results of this engagement have also provided the basis for the development of a Métis Nation framework to advance reconciliation for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors.

As we have done since the signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord in April, 2017, we will continue to work with the Trudeau government in good faith, and in the belief that it is truly committed to reconciliation and has positive and sincere intentions to make life better in this country for all Indigenous peoples, and in our case, for the Métis Nation. We strongly believe that this commitment must extend to Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and that Canada must acknowledge its responsibilities in this regard. As partners in reconciliation, Canada must consider the terrible history that Métis Survivors have endured and its profound negative impacts on their lives to this day, and we must work together to find just solutions to support them in building a better life and a brighter future.

**Clément Chartier**



## **A Message from Minister of Social Development, David Chartrand**

The Sixties Scoop is a catch-all phrase for a series of policies enacted by provincial child welfare authorities beginning in the mid-1950s, which saw thousands of Indigenous children taken from their homes and families, placed in foster homes, and eventually adopted out to mostly non-Indigenous families across Canada and the United States. For many Métis citizens and their families, the words “Sixties Scoop” invoke a sharp sense of profound loss and unimaginable grief that stretches across generations, a grief that is with us still. It is a time for the trauma visited upon our Métis people, our Nation, by these terrible and misguided government policies that continued well into the late 1980s and early 1990s, to be acknowledged, honoured and addressed.

With the signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord in April 2017, the government of Canada and the Métis Nation began a process of reconciliation and committed to building a renewed nation-to-nation relationship, based on recognition of Métis rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. This Accord has provided us with a clear path towards real reconciliation with the Métis Nation, one based on actions as well as words. This process must continue and include reconciling the wrongs of the Sixties Scoop.

While Canada has begun the long-overdue task of reconciling the wrongs of the Sixties Scoop with Indigenous people, this task has not yet been completed. In October 2017, the Government of Canada announced a multimillion-dollar settlement with First Nations and Inuit Survivors. Incomprehensibly, Métis Survivors were not considered or included in that settlement.

Since that time the Métis National Council and I, as your MNC Minister of Social Development, have been working to rectify this most recent wrong. In addition to the discussions with federal government officials that are ongoing, in October, 2018, we held an inaugural Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Symposium in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which brought together Métis Survivors and Métis Nation leadership to assess ways in which we can work towards a negotiated settlement for Métis Survivors. In early 2019, we followed up with a series of engagement sessions with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and their family members to hear their stories, and to engage them directly in helping us develop a framework and set of recommendations for advancing their rights and having their needs met. For many participating Survivors, these discussions were a difficult and painful beginning to their healing journey. We thank you for your courage, and honour you and pray for your continued healing. As a result of your significant contributions, we are pleased to release this What We Heard report. The recommendations in this report that you helped develop provide the parameters for our continued discussions and negotiations with Canada on Métis Nation Sixties Scoop reconciliation.

**David Chartrand**

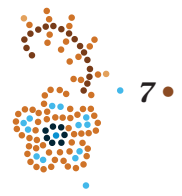


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge the courage and contributions of the 183 Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop and their Family Members who came together and gave so unstintingly of their time in sharing their stories, their experiences and their wisdom during the Métis Nation engagement sessions. These discussions are not easy. Your contributions represent an unprecedented step forward in the process of recognizing and addressing the profound injustices visited upon Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families. Most importantly, you are helping us identify a path towards reconciliation, reparation and healing for Métis individuals, families, communities who have suffered so profoundly and needlessly as a result of that terrible chapter in Canadian history known as the Sixties Scoop.

We also acknowledge the substantial contributions of our MNC Sixties Scoop team led by Duane Morrisseau-Beck, for their continuing efforts to shine a light on the profound negative impacts Canada's child welfare policies have had on the well-being of Métis children and their families for too many generations.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The “Sixties Scoop” was a child welfare policy developed and implemented in the early 1950s and lasting well into the late 1980s and early 1990s. This multi-generational child welfare practice involved apprehending First Nations, Métis and Inuit children from their communities and placing them, in most cases, into middle-class Euro-Canadian families. First Nation, Métis and Inuit children were often placed within these homes that were hundreds, or sometimes, thousands of miles away from their families. The stark separation of families and the wholesale disruption of communities that characterized the Sixties Scoop created profound, intergenerational impacts that continue to contribute to the current socioeconomic difficulties facing Indigenous peoples, including many Métis Nation Citizens, today.

This ongoing federal policy was upheld by successive Governments of Canada over multiple generations. The trauma experienced by the forced separation of Métis Nation and other Indigenous Children from their families is a tragedy beyond comprehension. Many Métis Survivors who were part of the Sixties Scoop, experienced profound cultural harms and losses, and in some cases physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and sexual abuse.

On April 13, 2017, after a period of relationship building and negotiation, the newly elected Liberal Government of Canada and the Métis Nation, represented by Métis National Council (MNC) and its Governing Members, signed an historic Canada-Métis Nation Accord (the Accord). The Accord reflects and formalizes the Parties’ shared commitment to establishing a renewed nation-to-nation relationship between the Government of Canada and the Métis Nation, one based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, partnership, and importantly, reconciliation.

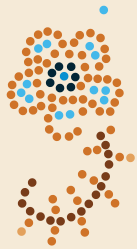
The substantial work that has occurred between Canada and the Métis Nation since the signing of the Accord in 2017 has included a Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Symposium held in 2018 organized by the Métis National Council (MNC), which was followed in 2019 by a series of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Engagement Sessions and negotiations. The Métis National Council is a pioneer in creating a Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor framework for negotiation and reconciliation, one in which Survivors have been directly involved in developing. The direct engagement with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors undertaken by the Métis Nation represents an unprecedented step forward to recognize and address these injustices.

The journey towards recognition, reconciliation and redress for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors has been slow and painful, and remains fraught. While in February, 2018, the Ontario court sided with plaintiffs in a Sixties Scoop class action that the federal government was liable for the harm done to Indigenous children who were placed into foster care in non-Aboriginal homes, to date the experiences of Métis people have been ignored. Incomprehensibly, Métis Survivors were completely left out of the federal government’s multimillion-dollar settlement reached later that year with First Nations and Inuit victims of the Sixties Scoop. The failure of Canada to recognize and honour the experiences of Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop remains a significant, unresolved issue for the Métis Nation.



We believe that Canada's commitment to building a nation-to-nation relationship and reconciliation, with the Métis Nation evidenced by the signing of the 2017 Accord, must include direct consideration for our Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors.

*We must now work together to ensure that all of our Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors (Lost Moccasins) are acknowledged, treated with respect, provided the opportunity to heal, and compensated like others who have suffered from Canada's colonial legacy of the Sixties Scoop.*



**MNC President Clément Chartier, 2017**

## **Engaging Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors**

In October, 2018, the MNC held an inaugural Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Symposium in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which brought together Métis Survivors and Métis Nation leadership to assess ways in which we can work towards a negotiated settlement for Métis Survivors.

In early 2019, we followed up with a series of engagement sessions with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and their family members to hear their stories, and to engage them directly in helping us develop a framework and set of recommendations for advancing their rights and having their needs met. Engagement sessions were held across the Métis Nation Homeland and included Métis Nation leaders from the MNC and its Governing Members and Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop.

### ***Objectives***

One central objective of the engagement sessions was to gather input from Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop in order to build the foundation for a framework of reconciliation that will then be used for negotiating a settlement agreement between Canada and Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors.

A second objective was to hear what Métis Survivors needed for reconciliation, for justice, and for healing, as the Métis Nation moves forward with these negotiations with Canada.

### ***Process for Engagement Sessions***

Over a period of six weeks, a total of 183 Métis people directly impacted by the Sixties Scoop, including 140 Survivors and 43 family members, met with Métis Nation leaders and participated in five Engagement Sessions held in the following locations:

- **Swan River, Manitoba** (March 15-17, 2019), with Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors from the Northwest, The Pas, Thompson, Interlake, Southwest, Southeast and/or Winnipeg areas in attendance.





- **Winnipeg, Manitoba** (March 22-24, 2019).
- **Saskatoon, Saskatchewan** (April 5-7, 2019).
- **Toronto, Ontario** (April 12-14, 2019).
- **Richmond, British Columbia** (April 26-28, 2019).

A series of Probe Questions was used to stimulate discussions in each session. While the specific wording of questions varied slightly in each location, examples of key topics covered included (but were not limited to) the following:

- What legacies of the Sixties Scoop would you like to see addressed in any process of reconciliation?
- What would you consider to be positive outcomes for you and your family in any reconciliation process?
- What is the most important for you in this engagement process?
- What is most important for you in the reconciliation process?
- What do you need from your Provincial Métis Government?
- What do you need to heal?

A trauma team was on site throughout to provide support and ensure the health and wellness needs of Survivors. A gathering place and accommodations were also made available for Métis Elders in attendance.

Extensive notes were taken during these sessions and later thematically analysed.

## Results - What We Heard

Together the Symposium and the engagement sessions provided a unique opportunity to hear directly from Métis Survivors what was important to them, and to understand how best to move forward in honouring and addressing their needs.

The result of this engagement contributed to the development of a collective response highlighting what have been termed the Five Pillars of Reconciliation:





Survivors responses with respect to the Five Pillars of Reconciliation are summarized below.

## FIVE PILLARS OF RECONCILIATION

### I. Reparation

Participants indicated that reparation is a critical concern for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, as well as for their biological parents, families, children, grandchildren, and communities.

*We want the government to take ownership for ripping our families apart and taking children from their communities. We want the government to recognize the wrongs they did during the Sixties Scoop era.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

Discussion around what form that reparation should take was varied, with reference to both financial and other forms of compensation.

In addition to financial compensation, participants also spoke about the intergenerational impacts of the Sixties Scoop, and recommended that compensation needs to include programs and services that create connections and promote healing from the intergenerational trauma.

The need for education supports for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors who missed opportunities, as well as an education fund for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors' children and grandchildren, were also recommended, including for Métis children and youth who are in care today.

Participants in the engagement sessions recommended that reparation needed to include unlimited counselling as well as financial compensation, while others commented that no amount of money can give you back your self-worth, highlighting the need for wraparound supports for Survivors.

### II. Apology

Apologies can offer a portal for healing. Yet Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors commented that while apologies are essential, a simple verbal apology without accompanying action that led to real change would not be welcome. Participants also indicated the need for existing Child and Family Services (CFS), Children Aids Societies (CAS), and governments to formally acknowledge what was done to Métis children, their families, and communities. Participants further commented that accountability, responsibility, ownership, and apologies must extend to other institutions, such as the Church, RCMP, and medical facilities who were also part of and enabled the Sixties Scoop.



### III. Commemoration

#### *Education as Commemoration*

Participants overwhelmingly stated that curriculum change and public education is needed so that the Canadian public can learn about this dark era of the Sixties Scoop, and so this does not happen again.

It was envisaged that such education for Canadians would increase public accountability and respect, and promote an understanding of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors as strong, resilient, and resourceful people.

*The story of injustice perpetrated against our Métis people needs to be heard by all Canadians and ensure that the truth and these stories are taken as truth.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

#### **Monuments**

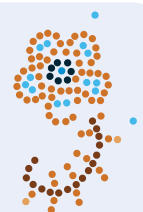
Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors provided a number of powerful recommendations to commemorate and honour their experiences. A more detailed list of recommendations is contained in the larger *What We Heard Report* that follows this Executive Summary.

- A Formal Apology Day to be held in Manitoba to honour all Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families.
- Remembrance of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors who were taken away.
- In smaller towns, create museums to commemorate our Lost Children, and provide education, and/or create exhibits at existing museums in larger centres.
- Plant a tree for every Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor and victim; create a commemorative park.
- Validate and acknowledge the Mothers and families of Métis children who were scooped.
- Commemorate and support young Métis women when they have babies, especially when adoption is involved.
- Create a respectful and safe place that allows for permanent commemoration and remembrance for Métis people and family members who are no longer with us and for those who have suffered.

### IV. Accountability

The importance to Métis Survivors of governments taking responsibility and accountability for their policies and actions cannot be underestimated.

*We want the government to take ownership for ripping families apart and taking children from their communities. We want the government to recognize the wrongs they did during the Sixties Scoop era.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**



In addition to federal and provincial governments' recognition of their wrongdoing during the Sixties Scoop era, participants recommended investigations into current Métis children apprehensions, as well as investments in prevention to stop the Millennium Scoop of Métis children that continues today.

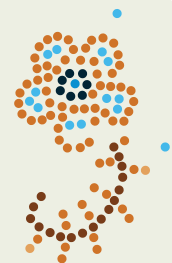
Participants indicated that accountability must include open and honest dialogue and communication at the local, regional, provincial and national levels.

Participants were in agreement that accountability must involve systemic changes that address addressing underlying determinants such as poverty and other socioeconomic factors. Such systemic change must include better legislation around Child and Family Services that serves to prevent agencies from adopting out Métis children outside of Métis families and communities, and/or to families who do not share Métis cultural laws, views and values. As one participant powerfully and concisely stated, we need “prevention not apprehension”.

## V. Healing

We now understand that healing is the process of becoming whole, sound and healthy again, as well as the restoration and recovery of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being within ourselves and relationships. Healing also requires full acknowledgement of, and respect for, the pain and suffering that Survivors have endured.

*Only the Métis Nation knows the history of the Métis people; we need to educate the public, the government and the family coming home. Further, in addressing the wrongs of our past, we also want to look to the future. We feel the consequences of intergenerational trauma and we want that to end.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

As we reflect upon and recommend ways in which to support and promote healing, it is critical that we be mindful that many Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors live in poverty which inhibits access to services and supports. Métis Survivors require wraparound services and supports that provide greater access to fundamental needs such as housing, transportation, cultural and community services. They need a place to call their own and to be with family.

Many Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors also stated that services to promote healing must be available not only for themselves but also their biological parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, families and communities.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

During the latter half of 2018 and the first half of 2019, MNC undertook an in-depth engagement process that brought together Métis Nation leaders from the Métis National Council and Governing Members with Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop.





The aim of this substantial engagement effort was to provide Métis Survivors with a Métis Nation-led opportunity and safe space to share their stories, knowledge and experiences, and to involve Survivors directly in the development of a tangible path towards reconciliation, and a framework and set of recommendations to guide implementation.

The Métis Nation is a pioneer in initiating and enabling this process for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors to be heard, and to be directly involved in the development of the Métis Nation's approach to negotiations with Canada.

**The Five Pillars of Reconciliation** that were identified during this in-depth engagement represent critical outcomes and steps forward in finding just solutions for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families, and are supported by the MNC and its five Governing Members.

Most importantly, Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors, their families and communities are also convincingly willing to support the overall direction identified during the engagement sessions, which includes the development of a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework Agreement to guide negotiations and support reconciliation structured around the five key **Principles of Reparation, Apology, Commemorations, Accountability and Healing**.

Canada has committed to working with the Métis Nation and Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors to right the historical wrongs visited upon Métis individuals, families and communities, in a spirit of reconciliation and through a process of negotiation. This work will be guided by the nation-to-nation relationship identified through the signing of the 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord, and through Canada's unconditional commitment to the principles of UNDRIP.

The Métis Nation looks forward to continuing to build upon this important foundation, and to moving ahead with the critical work required to address the outstanding needs of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors.





## WHAT WE HEARD:

### Report of the Métis Nation's Engagement with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors

#### 1. Background & Introduction

From 1951 and continuing through the 1990s, the government and Churches of this country pursued the wholesale removal of Métis children from their parents and families, from our homes, our communities, and our Métis Nation. Our Métis children were effectively stolen.

This era, which came to be known as the Sixties Scoop, remains a dark and deeply painful part of our nation's collective history, and the terrible impacts continue to affect our families today. The trauma experienced by the forced separation of Métis Nation children from their families is unspeakable.

The "Sixties Scoop" was a set of child welfare policies and practices developed and implemented in the early 1950s and which continued into the 1990s, that involved apprehending First Nations, Métis and Inuit children from their communities and placing them, in most cases, into middle-class Euro-Canadian families. First Nation, Métis and Inuit children were often placed within these homes that were hundreds, or sometimes, thousands of miles away from their families. The intergenerational impacts of the Sixties Scoop continue to contribute to the current socio-economic difficulties facing Métis Citizens today.

At the time, government officials, social workers, administrators, lawyers, and judges typically viewed everyday practices of apprehending children from Indigenous families to be in the best interest of the child. The ideal home that a child should be placed in was widely considered to be a white middle-class home, in a white middle-class neighborhood.

These entrenched societal norms among the non-Indigenous population were throwbacks to Canada's recent colonial past and Euro-centric values that negated and wrongly disparaged Métis and other Indigenous customs and traditions. Commonly held misconceptions at the time situated Indigenous values and ways of life as inferior, and Indigenous parents as incapable of raising their children. The poverty experienced by many Indigenous people, which itself was a direct outcome of land dispossession and similarly misconceived and misguided government policies and institutions, fed into this sorry narrative. One tragic result was that many Métis and other Indigenous children were apprehended, torn from their families, sometimes at birth, and placed into the care of non-indigenous homes.

An example of one such program was the Adopt Indian Métis program (AIM) conceived by the Saskatchewan provincial government in the 1960s.

The AIM Program started in October, 1967 and continued well into the 1970s. It was the Saskatchewan government's response to the increasing number of Indigenous children who were being taken from their families and ending up in the provincial child welfare system. At that time the province had approximately 1500 – 1700 children in the care of the child welfare system, approximately, 75% of whom were First Nations and Métis children. In response, the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services (DSS) created a child welfare program entitled Adopt Indian Métis Program (AIM).



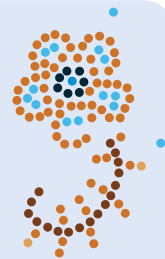
While the intention of the AIM Program was to place Indigenous and Métis children into adoptive families and long-term, stable homes, many children were actually placed into temporary and foster homes and ended up going through a large number of placements and foster homes before exiting the system in their teens.

Saskatchewan was not alone in implementing these kinds of misguided programs and policies, with other provinces adopting similar approaches in their respective child welfare systems.

Nationally, the exact number of Métis children experiencing temporary and long-term foster homes as well as adoptions during this lamentable period in our nation's history is at yet unknown, as information about Métis identity was not routinely collected or analysed. For this reason, Métis children became known as the *invisible* and *hidden* children of the child welfare system (Carriere et al; 2017).

This report, and the work that led to it, represents an important first step for the Métis Nation and for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors on the path towards healing, reconciliation and a negotiated agreement with Canada to address these injustices.

*We must now work—together—to ensure that all of our Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors (Lost Moccasins) are acknowledged, treated with respect, provided the opportunity to heal, and compensated like others who have suffered from Canada's colonial legacy of the Sixties Scoop.*



**MNC President Clément Chartier,  
Press Release October 13, 2017**

The Métis Nation vision, the unprecedented work we are now undertaking, and the journey we have embarked upon with our Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors, will ensure that no matter where they are on their personal healing journey, all know that the Métis Nation honours and respects them, and welcomes them home.

*If we do not stand for our Métis Children and have them in our Métis homes and communities learning our history, culture and language, they are not going to be strong and proud of who they are. As survivors, we want you to realize that we are no longer invisible and hidden children of the child welfare system, no longer alone.*



**Métis Nation Elder**



## 2. CANADA & THE MÉTIS NATION: Moving Towards Reconciliation

### 2.1 Canada Reconciling with the Métis Nation

The Métis Nation has struggled for recognition and justice in Canadian federation since before confederation existed. It began at the Red River and sadly, the struggle continues to this day. The Métis Nation's history with Canada is both convoluted and fraught.

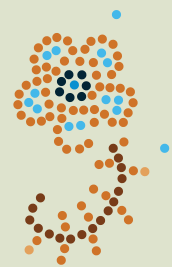
In 1982, First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation people achieved monumental success with the inclusion of s. 35 in the Constitution Act, 1982, which acknowledges and provides for the protection of their existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and as well, refers to the fiduciary responsibilities of the Crown in this regard.

The long-overdue and explicit recognition of Métis in the constitution as one of three distinct Aboriginal peoples in Canada, while a victory for the Métis Nation, did not immediately translate into improved government policies or programs for the Métis people. Indeed, Métis Nation rights, needs and priorities remained largely ignored, unacknowledged and unaddressed for many decades to come.

This ongoing inaction on the part of the Crown led to a series of legal actions that culminated in several landmark Supreme Court rulings in favour of the Métis, each of which gave increasing direction to Canada that Métis Nation rights and their responsibilities in this regard must be honoured (e.g. R v. Powley 2003; Manitoba Metis Federation v. Canada, 2013; and Daniels v. Canada, 2016).

With the election of the Trudeau Liberal Government in 2015, a clear political commitment was made to move away from endless litigation and instead begin a process to build stronger relationships between Canada and Indigenous peoples, and to embark on a process of reconciliation which would be achieved through rights recognition, true partnership, negotiation and collaboration.

*No relationship is more important to our government and to Canada than the one with Indigenous peoples. Today, we reaffirm our government's commitment to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples, one based on the recognition of rights, respect, trust, co-operation, and partnership.*



**Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Justin Trudeau, on  
National Aboriginal Day June 21, 2016  
Ottawa, Ontario**

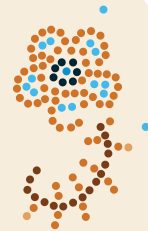
In addition to the above Supreme Court decisions, a comprehensive report and set of recommendations by Thomas Isaac, Canada's Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis, and released in 2016, laid much of the groundwork for Canada's current reconciliation efforts.





In his report, Thomas Isaac emphasized that reconciliation must be more than platitudes and verbal recognition. He noted that reconciliation flows from the constitutionally protected rights of Métis that are protected by s.35.2 of Canada's constitution, and is inextricably tied to the honour of the Crown, and furthermore, it must be grounded in practical actions (Isaac Report, page 3; 2016).

*The principle of reconciliation is broad but simply put, should focus on settling past grievances with a plan to moving forward together collaboratively and in accordance with Canadian law.*



**Thomas Isaac**

**A Matter of National and Constitutional Import**

In the present context, the burning question becomes, “What does honouring Métis Nation rights and reconciliation mean in the lives of Métis children and families who have been impacted by the Sixties Scoop, both now and across generations?” These are questions that are of central concern to both the Métis Nation, and to the federal government.

To begin to address some of the pressing issues related to Indigenous child welfare, in January, 2018, then Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, the Honourable Jane Philpott, called an Emergency Meeting on Child Welfare which was held in Ottawa.

The Métis National Council and several of its Governing members participated in the Emergency Meeting, and spoke to the challenges faced by Métis children and families in their encounters with child and family services, both now and historically. Métis Nation representatives highlighted the need for forward planning to begin to address Métis Nation concerns and priorities in this critical area, and the importance of this work to reconciliation efforts.

Shortly after this Emergency Meeting, in February 2018, the Ontario court sided with plaintiffs in a Sixties Scoop class action lawsuit, concluding that the federal government was liable for the harm done to Indigenous children who were removed from their homes and placed into foster care in and/or adopted by non-Aboriginal homes.

The federal government subsequently settled with the plaintiffs, providing for a multimillion-dollar settlement for with Indigenous Survivors of the Sixties Scoop. Yet Canada determined that the settlement would apply only to First Nations and Inuit Survivors, not to Métis, and for the period between 1951 and 1991. In short, Métis Survivors were completely excluded from any consideration, their trauma and experiences ignored.

The failure of Canada to recognize and honour the experience of Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop in this settlement flies in the face of reconciliation principles and efforts, and to date remains an unresolved and bitterly painful issue for the Métis Nation.



### 3. RECONCILIATION WITH MÉTIS SIXTIES SCOOP SURVIVORS

Despite these significant setbacks, the MNC continues its work to identify and address the unmet needs of our Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors, and to bring these needs forward to our Accord partners so that together we can find a path to resolution and reconciliation on this important front.

Consistent with the intent and principles embodied by the 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord, the MNC approach remains one of collaboration and negotiation. This kind of collaborative approach becomes particularly important as increasingly we are hearing from Métis Survivors that they are being approached by lawyers seeking to involve them in litigation. The MNC continues to advise Survivors, in good faith, that other, better options exist outside the courts. However, it must be recognized that the risk of litigation remains and will likely only increase if negotiations fail to produce any other viable option.

Regardless of the considerable challenges confronting us or the various directions that might be taken in this policy arena, a critical first step for all concerned is to ensure the needs and perspectives of Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors are fully understood and accurately documented.

#### 3.1 MNC National Métis Sixties Scoop Symposium

To this end, on October 19-21, 2018, the MNC hosted the inaugural National Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Symposium in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Symposium brought together leaders and representatives from the MNC and its governing Members, Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families, Elders, counsellors, and other delegates. The primary purpose of the National Symposium, the first of its kind, was to provide a safe space and much-needed opportunity for Survivors to share their experiences and have their stories heard, and to begin to chart a way towards resolution.

This highly successful Symposium provided the basis for designing the subsequent engagement sessions, and also the later development of a framework for potentially negotiating a settlement agreement with the federal government.

Specifically, the National Symposium provided for:

- An opportunity to celebrate Métis Nation culture, identity, and shared experiences, through conversation, music and dance.
- Opportunities for networking.
- Access to additional information about the Sixties Scoop experience.
- A review and discussion of best practices examples of reconciliation initiatives in Canada, and types of reconciliation models that can be employed.
- Further information about Canada's 2017 Settlement Agreement with First Nations and Inuit.
- A discussion of the need to develop a process to properly account for the number of Métis children stolen, which has not been done to date.
- A discussion and introduction to the Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Portal that has been developed to provide Survivors with ready access to information, and to facilitate sharing.



## **3.2 Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors' Portal**

During and after the National Symposium, it became clear that Métis Survivors had an unmet need for better access to information and resources related to their personal experiences as part of the Sixties Scoop (for example adoption records, other data that might help them track family members), as well as a means to connect and communicate with other Survivors and community, and to their culture.

To meet these needs, on December 18, 2018, Métis Nation Minister of Social Development David Chartrand announced the official launch of a dedicated portal designed by the MNC Sixties Scoop team to help Survivors connect with each other, and gain access to other support, information, and resources not otherwise available to them.

## **3.3 Targeted Engagement with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors**

In early 2019, the MNC Sixties Scoop team, lead by Minister Chartrand, hosted a series of engagement sessions with Métis Sixties Scoop survivors and their family members, to provide them with additional opportunity to share their stories, and for Métis Nation leadership to learn from Survivors' experiences. At these sessions, Survivors were also invited to contribute to developing a Métis Nation framework and set of recommendations for having their priorities addressed and needs met.

In addition to Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop, in attendance were Métis Nation leaders and staff from the MNC and its five Governing Members: Manitoba Metis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario.

### **3.3.1 Objectives**

One central objective of the engagement sessions was to gather input from Métis Survivors of the Sixties Scoop, in order to build the foundation for a framework of reconciliation. This framework will then be used to inform our discussions with Canada, and for negotiating a settlement agreement between Canada and Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors.

A second objective was to hear what Métis Survivors needed for reconciliation, justice, and for healing, as the Métis Nation moves forward with its negotiations with the Canadian federal government.

### **3.3.2 Process for Engagement Sessions**

The Engagement Sessions were directed and guided by the MNC lead on the Sixties Scoop team, who is also a Survivor. A trauma team was on site during all sessions to support and protect the health and well-being of Survivors in attendance, while a gathering place and accommodations were made available for Métis Elders who were also present throughout to provide support.

Over a period of six weeks, a total of 183 Métis people impacted by the Sixties Scoop, including 140 Survivors and 43 of their family members, met with Métis Nation leaders from MNC and its Governing Members, and participated in a total of five Engagement Sessions held in the following locations:



- **Swan River, Manitoba on March 15-17, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors came from Swan River, Dauphin, Thompson and Winnipeg.
- **Winnipeg, Manitoba on March 22-24, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in attendance came from Winnipeg, Calgary, Badger, Kleinfeld, Brandon, Steed, Thicket Portage, Port Hood, Thompson, East Selkirk, Lynn Lake, Surrey, Merritt, Airdrie, Portage La Prairie, Sioux Narrows, The Pas, Penticton, Cranberry Portage and St. Ambroise.
- **Edmonton, Alberta on March 29-31, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in attendance came from Lac La Biche, Edmonton, St. Paul, Faust, Calgary, High Prairie, McLennan, High Level, Galahad, Innisfree, Ashmont, Wide Water, Enderby, Hanna, Minnesota (USA), Cold Lake and Stoney Plaine.
- **Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on April 5-7, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in attendance came from Saskatoon, Regina, Pine House Lake, Stoney Rapids, Laloche, Pine House, Prince Albert and St. Louis.
- **Toronto, Ontario on April 12-14, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in attendance came from Gatineau, Newmarks, Midland, Kingston, Toronto, Ottawa, Concord, Bracebridge, Sarnia, Puslinch, and Caledon.
- **Richmond, British Columbia on April 26-28, 2019:** Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors in attendance came from Fort St. James, Kamloops, Anglemont, Salmon Arm, Richmond, Nanaimo, Port Albeni, Lumby, Port Coquitlam, Vancouver, Port Moody, Surrey, LadySmith, Powell River, Winnipeg, Prince Albert, Fort St. John, Oakville, Regina, Ile a la Crosse, Mission, Clearwater, Terrace, Chilliwack, New West Minister, Hudson's Hope, Victoria, Medicine Hat, Kitchener, Enderby, Dauphin, Sorento and New Westminster.

### 3.3.3 Format for Discussions

A series of Probe Questions was used to stimulate discussion during each engagement session. Both Roundtable Discussions and a more structured, Métis-guided discussion format called “Kitchen Table Talks” were employed during the engagement sessions to encourage high levels of interaction among participants, and their overall interest and engagement throughout.

While the specific wording of questions varied slightly in each location, the overarching topics covered included (but were not limited to) the following.

- What legacies of the Sixties Scoop you would you like to see addressed in any process of reconciliation?
- What would you consider to be positive outcomes for you and your family in any reconciliation process?
- What is the most important for you in this engagement process?
- What is most important for you in the reconciliation process?
- What do you need from your Provincial Métis Government?
- What do you need to heal?

A more complete list of probe questions that were used to guide the engagement process and discussions is provided below, with the caveat that in all engagement sessions, facilitators were encouraged to support a free and fulsome flow of ideas and conversation, and allow the flexibility for that to occur.

- In the process of developing an agreement with the Crown, what are some of the legacies of the Sixties Scoop that you would like to see addressed in order for reconciliation to occur?





- Does there need to be a “Truth-Seeking” process in order for reconciliation to occur?
- At the end of the reconciliation process, what would you consider a positive outcome for you and your family?
- What is the most important issue for you in this process?
- What do you need from your provincial Métis Government to support you?
- What do you need to heal?
- Is a Sixties Scoop truth-seeking process needed?
- What legacies of the Sixties Scoop should be addressed through reconciliation?
- What are some of the positive outcomes for Sixties Scoop reconciliation?

### 3.3.4 Analysis

Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and participants were generous with their input. Extensive notes were taken during these engagement sessions to capture their perspectives, and these notes were then analysed thematically.

Overall, there were a number of common themes that emerged from the comments and recommendations provided by Métis Survivors during the engagement sessions.

While these themes were generally consistent across all participants and engagement sessions, there were also some comments and suggestions that were more specific and unique to a particular Métis Nation region or group. These differences are noted in the discussion below.

## 4. WHAT WE HEARD - THE FIVE PILLARS OF RECONCILIATION

There were five overarching themes that emerged from the engagement sessions with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors. These themes are consistent with those that were identified during the earlier discussions that took place during the National Sixties Scoop Symposium. The five themes have been termed the Five Pillars of Reconciliation

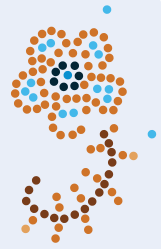


### I. Reparation

Participants indicated that reparation is a critical concern for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, as well as for their biological parents, families, children, grandchildren and communities.



*We want the government to take ownership for ripping our families apart and taking children from their communities. We want the government to recognize the wrongs they did during the Sixties Scoop era.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

Discussion around what form that reparation should take varied, with reference to both financial and other forms of compensation.

In addition to financial compensation, participants also spoke at length about the inter-generational impacts of the Sixties Scoop and recommended that reparation needs to provide for programs and services that create connections and promote healing related to intergenerational trauma.

The need for education supports for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors who missed these education opportunities during childhood, as well as an education fund for the children and grandchildren of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, were also recommended, as well as for Métis children and youth who are in care today.

Other participants in the engagement sessions emphasized that reparation needed to include unlimited access to counselling services as well as financial compensation, noting that no amount of money can give you back your self-worth, if that is all that is provided.

## **II. Apology**

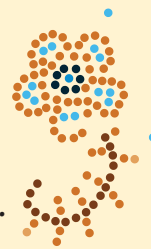
Apologies can offer a portal for healing. Yet Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors collectively stated that while apologies are essential, they do not want an apology that is not accompanied by concrete action that leads to real change. Participants also indicated the need for existing Child and Family Services (CFS), Children Aids Societies (CAS), and governments to be part of a formal apology and acknowledgement of what was done to Métis children, their families, and communities. Participants further commented that accountability, responsibility, ownership, and apologies must extend to other institutions, such as the Church, RCMP, and medical facilities - that is, all those who were part of and enabled the Sixties Scoop. To illustrate this point, Survivors from Northern Manitoba described situations where the CFS arrived with members of the RCMP to forcibly remove Métis children from their families and communities. They strongly felt that the RCMP in this case must be held accountable.



Many Métis Nation Survivors also talked about the role of hospitals in enabling the Sixties Scoop. For example, Métis children who were taken to hospitals because they had tuberculosis, sometimes considerable distances from their families, would often be apprehended at the hospital.

Some parents in attendance at the sessions also stated that they were coerced into signing away their children without their full and informed consent. Many parents were unable to speak the language, or understand the documents they were given to sign and were therefore at great disadvantage.

*Nobody has really touched on medical issues. I cannot find the information because conveniently, the records were burned. I didn't know I was [being] misunderstood. It was not a mental issue; it was medical issues. I am not retarded. I went to school. I am an engineer.*



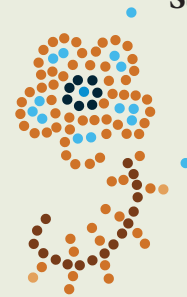
**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**

In discussing the lack of communication between federal and provincial governments and Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families, many participants commented that they are left with many disturbing, unanswered questions and concerns, such as the following:

- What was the logic of removing half of the children from a family that was considered unfit?
- What gave the government the authorization to remove the name of fathers from birth certificates just to put us up for adoptions?
- Why would they place children into foster homes and with families where it was unsafe and abuse was happening?
- Why did we get placed in homes that were unfit themselves, i.e. no food?
- I was a ward of the court, and as such it has been deemed that I cannot be a foster parent today; that needs to change.
- We should be able to share our truth without fear of repercussions.
- One participant recommended that the Métis Nation and/or Survivors now be provided with access to greater information as well as funds (e.g. scholarships, grants and

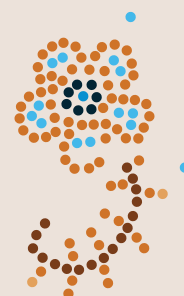
*Apologies [alone] will not take away what happened; they will not take away the pain, suffering, and turmoil.*

**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**



*We want an apology with contrition, not only from the federal and provincial governments, but also from Child and Family Services, Children Aid Societies, Social Services, Hospitals, the RCMP and Churches.*

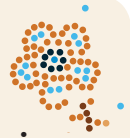
**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**





bursaries) to allow them to engage professional researchers to gather information on the above questions, and also on the specific impacts of the Sixties Scoop for Métis children and families more generally.

*We need to remember as a Métis Nation that we have not failed.  
The government failed us.*



**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**

### III. COMMEMORATION

#### *Education as Commemoration*

Participants overwhelmingly stated that curriculum change and public education is needed for the Canadian public to ensure that this dark era of the Sixties Scoop does not happen again.

*The story of injustice perpetrated against our Métis people needs  
to be heard by all Canadians and ensure that the truth and  
these stories are taken as truth.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

#### *Monuments*

Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors provided a number of recommendations designed to commemorate and honour their experiences, including:

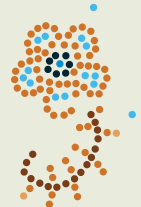
- A Formal Apology Day to be held in Manitoba to honour all Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families.
- A formal Remembrance of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors who were taken away.
- In smaller towns, create museums to commemorate our Lost Children and provide education, and/or create exhibits at museums in larger centres.
- Monuments that commemorate the Sixties Scoop and, Monuments that could be placed in capital cities and at institutions (Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Participant; Session Two, 2019:29)
- Plant a tree for every Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor and victim create a commemorative park.
- Commemorate and support young Métis women when they have babies, especially when adoption is involved.
- Validate and acknowledge the Mothers and families of Métis children who were scooped
- A headstone for an unmarked grave to commemorate loved ones.
- Create a respectful and safe place of commemoration and remembrance for Métis people and family members who are no longer with us and for those who have suffered
- Create a National Day to honour Métis people, similar to the day to honour Indigenous people.



## IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

The importance to Métis Survivors of government taking responsibility and accountability for their policies and actions cannot be underestimated.

*We want the government to take ownership for ripping families apart and taking children from their communities. We want the government to recognize the wrongs they did during the Sixties Scoop era.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

As well as the federal and provincial governments' recognition of wrongdoing during the Sixties Scoop era, participants underscored the need to conduct investigations into current Métis children apprehensions, as well as provide investments in prevention to stop the Millennium Scoop of Métis children that is occurring today. As one participant stated, we need "prevention not apprehension".

Participants indicated that accountability must include open and honest dialogue and communication at the local, regional, provincial and national levels.

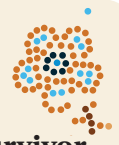
Participants were also adamant that accountability must involve systemic changes that address addressing underlying determinants such as poverty and other socioeconomic factors. Such systemic change must include better legislation around Child and Family Services that includes clauses to prevent agencies from adopting out Métis children outside of Métis families and communities, and/or to families who do not share Métis cultural laws, views and values.

*Bill C-92 was recently introduced, which is legislation for Child and Family Services (CFS). It will finally put into law what Indigenous Peoples have been asking for decades, that affirm their inherent jurisdiction to determine what is best for their children.*



**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Co-Chair**

*Change within the Canadian government needs to happen now. It is time.*



**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**



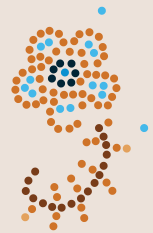


## V. HEALING

We now understand that healing is the process of becoming whole, sound and healthy again as well as the restoration and recovery of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being within ourselves and relationships. In the current context, healing requires full acknowledgement of, and respect for, the pain and suffering that Métis Survivors and their families have endured, accompanied by concrete actions to address their healing needs.

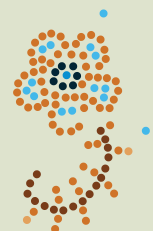
Many Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors also commented that services to support healing must extend to their biological parents, their children, grandchildren, families and communities, and be grounded in Métis Nation culture.

*Only the Métis Nation knows the history of the Métis people; we need to educate the public, the government and the family coming home. Further, in addressing the wrongs of our past, we also want to look to the future. We feel the consequences of intergenerational trauma and we want that to end.*



**Métis Sixties Scoop Survivor**

*It is time to rise up and reclaim Métis heritage. Never forgetting. Ensuring that we capture oral teachings and Métis medicines to have them become contemporary and well known.*



**Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivor**

As we reflect upon and recommend ways in which governments can now support and promote healing for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, it is critical that we be mindful that many Survivors live in poverty, which inhibits access to services and supports. Métis Survivors are therefore in great need of wraparound services and supports that address the social and cultural determinants of well-being, and which provide greater access to basic needs such as housing, transportation, and community services. As well, Survivors need a place and cultural space to call their own.

In summarizing the discussions related to these issues, participants recommended the following to support and foster their healing journey.



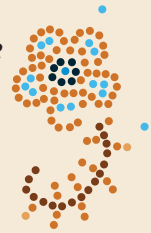
- Celebrate and honour Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors coming home.
- The creation, implementation and continuity of culturally appropriate Health, Healing and Wellness Programs and Services as well as health benefits for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families.
- Survivor-to-Survivor Support: arrange meetings for foster children; create programs like Alcoholics Anonymous for survivor and family support.
- Provide traditional, alternative, and contemporary therapies and retreats, such as a centrally located Healing Center and/or traditional Métis camps. Having access to land was regarded as a critical component of healing for Survivors, their families and communities.
- Develop mentorship programs for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, youth and children.
- Develop a repatriation program to advocate and to gather information for all Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors, adoptees and former foster children.
- Develop and create meaningful government and systems change that facilitates future Métis children and families having access to their own records and documents.
- Provide family retreats once or twice per year for Métis families to connect, heal, and to get to know each other.
- Provide reunification services and support for Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and their families in Canada, USA and for those living overseas.
- Facilitate reunification processes and support, register on a national database that can be readily accessed through the Sixties Scoop Portal.
- To heal from intergenerational traumas, provide intergenerational healing opportunities with trained counsellors, and with those who have had specific education with respect to the Sixties Scoop.
- Provide grief counselling to Survivors and their families, to promote healing from loss of childhood, loss of family, and loss of culture, identity, and community.
- Provide a range of services to help Survivors deal with anger. Realize that each Survivor may be in a different place and stage of healing, health and wellness.
- Create a greater understanding and awareness that Métis Survivors have come from different places, and may have been adopted, in foster care and/or institutionalized, and acknowledge that intergenerational healing and counselling needs to recognize and respect the similarities yet distinct experiences and impacts for Métis adoptees and foster children.
- Create a mechanism for forgiveness to help with healing, including potentially having a commemoration and “letting go” ceremony.
- Provide services and support that assist Survivors to heal from the residual impacts of the Sixties Scoop such as lateral violence and harassment.
- Provide Métis-specific and Métis-guided healing and counselling opportunities and processes.
- Create a respectful and safe place for Métis people to share stories and experiences about what happened to them.
- Promote and encourage federal, provincial and municipal governments to integrate Métis laws, views, culture, and teachings that are Métis-guided and inclusive, in curriculum, policies, and in information on “best practices” .



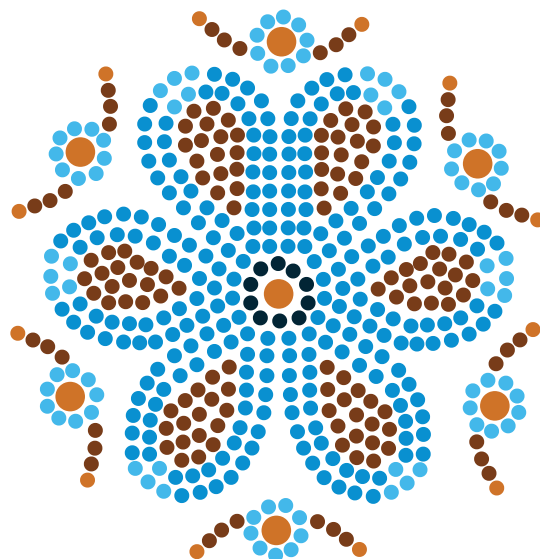
- Highlight the need for change in the delivery of child and family services and in legislation: For example, Customary Care was implemented to ensure that Métis families and Métis children are raised in Métis communities. In this approach, if a Métis child is apprehended, the Métis government is notified.
- Ensure that aftercare support and services are available.
- Recognize that local services and supports are needed for Survivors and families living in rural, northern and isolated areas.
- Utilize Métis Nation Mental Health Guides that can be provided to Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors and their family members.
- Healing requires being heard, being understood and experiencing personal and cultural safety, and; programs and services that are culturally competent.

The conversation around healing was a difficult one for many Survivors who participated in these sessions, and who still struggle with that journey today. We acknowledge and honour their courage in coming forward, and will continue to support them on their journey.

*It is important to understand that this is the first and one of the most important steps for you and your family. Be mindful and gentle with yourself. Do not be afraid to reach out for support. This is a part of your process of healing.*



**Métis Nation Facilitator and Sixties Scoop Survivor.**



## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The insights and perspectives shared in this report flow directly from multiple conversations with Métis Nation leaders and Survivors of the Sixties Scoop, and most notably, from a series of engagement sessions that were held across the Métis Nation Homeland that brought together Survivors with Métis Nation leaders and representatives from the Métis National Council and its Governing Members.

The aim of this broader engagement effort was to provide Métis Survivors with a Métis Nation-led opportunity and safe space to share their stories, knowledge, and experiences, with a view to engage Survivors directly in the development of a tangible path towards reconciliation, and the development of a framework to guide implementation.

The Métis Nation is a pioneer in initiating and enabling this process for Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors to be heard, and to be directly involved in the development of the Métis Nation's approach to ongoing negotiations with Canada.

The Five Pillars of Reconciliation that were identified during this in-depth engagement represent critical outcomes and a clear path forward to finding just solutions for Métis Sixties Scoop survivors and their families, and are supported by the Métis National Council and its Governing Members.

Most importantly, Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors, their families and communities are convincingly willing to support the overall direction identified during this broader engagement effort, which includes the development of a Memorandum of Understanding and Frameworks Agreement to guide negotiations and support Reconciliation.

Canada has committed to working with the Métis Nation and Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors to right historical wrongs visited upon Métis individuals, families and communities, in a spirit of reconciliation, and through a process of negotiation. This work will be founded upon the nation-to-nation relationship that has been identified in the 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord, and through Canada's unconditional commitment to the principles of UNDRIP.

The Métis Nation looks forward to continuing to build upon this important foundation, and to moving ahead quickly with the critical work required to address the outstanding needs of Métis Nation Sixties Scoop Survivors.



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**MÉTIS NATION**



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Métis Nation  
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