



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

A COLLABORATIVE **PATHWAY FORWARD**

Progress, Partnerships, and the
Road Ahead (2021 - 2025)



Spirits Having Flown - Series 1, 2 and 3

About the Cover Art: Spirits Having Flown – Series 1, 2 and 3

Each time people walk through the door to enter or egress Council Chambers, they do so while walking through the symbols of the 7 Sacred Teachings. At the bottom of the side paintings are symbols for the Sacred Pipe and Sage, with the colours of the 4 directions of both the Dene and the Cree people. The Pipe is not burning tobacco represents how some of our cultural things have been taken away, but the Sage burns, representing that we have started along our own healing paths.

Reconciliation is not just an Aboriginal thing; we all have to do this together, no matter what walk of life you live in and come from. Reconciliation is about all of us! – Frederick R. McDonald.

About the Artist:

Frederick R. McDonald is an artist and a member of the Fort McKay First Nation. Frederick followed his dream to be an artist by attending the University of Calgary, graduating with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2001. While in university, he took on many challenges such as President of the First Nations Student Association, and by participating in other organizations like the Rainforest Action Group and the Committee Against Racism, giving him insights to different ways of seeing.

Frederick was born in Fort McMurray and raised in the bush along the Athabasca River and was brought up in the traditional hunting and trapping lifestyle of his parents. A way of life that still lives inside him.

Despite travelling all over the world, Fred's heart is still with his community. He's had many roles over the years and found personal satisfaction as the Fort McKay Treaty Days

coordinator and as the Athabasca Tribal Council Regional Gathering director. Always a leader, Fred served as the President of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association and has also had many board appointments including the Fort McMurray United Way.

As the CEO of the Fort McKay Group of Companies for four years, beginning this posting in 2008, he learned how to use his left brain more efficiently and says he saw firsthand how the corporate environment dynamics work. This adds another level of thinking when it comes to artistic perspectives.

Fred has returned to being an artist; it's where his heart has always been. He has had many exhibitions across Canada and has been collected by individuals and corporations from all parts of the world, including many institutions like the Glenbow Museum, The Alberta Arts Foundation, and the Government of Canada.

Fred loves painting but has also taken to poetry and photography equally. Being an artist, he says, he has an esoteric relationship with the cosmos, but mainly... art is life!





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Traditionally, Indigenous peoples greeted one another by acknowledging the land they were on when they met while hunting or gathering. They expressed gratitude for the land they shared and acknowledged whose territory they were on as a sign of respect and a way to build relationships.

Land acknowledgements are rooted in longstanding Indigenous protocols. Traditionally, when entering another Nation's territory, it was important to acknowledge the land, recognize the people of that territory, and show respect before beginning any gathering or discussion.

Today, land acknowledgements continue this practice. They are a way to recognize the Indigenous Peoples who have cared for these lands since time immemorial, and to remind everyone of the relationships that exist between land, people, and place.

RMWB Land Acknowledgement

I humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the 2025 Report	6
The Path Forward (2021 – 2025)	7
The Journey So Far	8
Message From Dennis Fraser, Director of Indigenous and Rural Relations	10
Progress on Adopted Calls to Action	11
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo: Adopted Calls to Action	12
Child Welfare, Family Supports and Education Foundations	19
Language and Culture	22
Health and Healing	24
Justice	25
Land Rights and Shared Stewardship	29
Governance, Accountability and Public Service Learning	32
Public Education, Youth Programming and Community Awareness	34
Commemoration, Archives and Residential School Legacy	37
Sports and Youth	39
Business and Reconciliation, Newcomer Awareness and Broader Community Learning	41
Looking Ahead	43

ABOUT THE 2025 REPORT

In 2021, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo formalized its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action through *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*. The report identified priority areas where the Municipality could take meaningful action through service delivery, partnerships, internal practices, and advocacy.

Since that time, the Municipality has provided annual updates outlining progress and continued commitments. Over four years, this work has expanded beyond its initial scope and has become more integrated across departments, services, and decision-making processes.

The 2025 report marks the completion of the original reporting cycle under *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*. It provides an overview of progress made in 2025 while also capturing how the Municipality's approach to reconciliation has evolved since 2021.

This report is intended to provide both a final update on the original commitments and a broader reflection on the progress, partnerships, and organizational changes that have taken shape over the past four years. It also helps identify the foundation now in place for continued work beyond this reporting cycle.



Spirits Having Flown - 3

The Path Forward (2021 – 2025)

When *A Collaborative Pathway Forward* was introduced in 2021, it established a foundation for the Municipality's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action within a municipal context, work that first began at the direction of Council in 2016.

Early efforts focused on strengthening relationships with First Nations and Métis communities, building internal awareness, and identifying areas where the Municipality could take meaningful action.

Since then, this work has continued to evolve.

Reconciliation is now more clearly reflected in the Municipality's relationships with Indigenous governments, its approach to planning and service delivery, and its support for community priorities. Relationships have deepened, internal processes have matured, and staff across the organization are broadening their awareness and confidence in contributing to reconciliation.

Several key milestones have been reached over this period. Protocol Agreements are now in place with all First Nations and Métis communities in the region, establishing a shared framework for collaboration. Municipal Service Agreements have also continued to advance, including the Municipal Service Agreement with Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, approved on February 14, 2025, supporting a more coordinated and transparent approach to service delivery.

Reconciliation is also reflected in day-to-day work across the organization. Staff are increasingly incorporating Indigenous knowledge, engaging with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and approaching their work with greater intention and cultural awareness. The work that formally began in 2021 has developed into a stronger foundation for ongoing collaboration, learning, and action.



THE JOURNEY SO FAR

2022

Deepening the Work

Departments begin weaving reconciliation into planning and operations. Relationships with First Nations and Métis communities continue to grow.

2016

Direction from Council

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, RMWB Council directed Administration to identify areas where the Municipality had jurisdiction to implement Calls to Action. Formative work included a multi-partner steering committee, a TRC Symposium, and prioritization in the Municipality's 2018 - 2021 Strategic Plan.

2021

Laying the Foundation

A Collaborative Pathway Forward is introduced, identifying priority Calls to Action and setting a foundation for municipal response and involvement in reconciliation.

2024

Carrying the Work Forward

Reconciliation becomes more consistently reflected in municipal processes, service delivery, and partnerships across the organization, with continued growth in internal awareness and external collaboration.

2023

Expanding the Path

Additional Calls to Action are adopted. The Municipality strengthens how it tracks progress and aligns its work with Council priorities, while expanding partnerships and community engagement.

2025

Reaching Key Milestones

Protocol Agreements are now in place with all six First Nations and all six Métis communities in the region, establishing a shared framework for collaboration. Service-related work also continues to advance, including the approval of a Municipal Service Agreement with Fort McMurray 468 First Nation. Work continues across service delivery, economic reconciliation, land-related matters, and community collaboration.



MESSAGE FROM **DENNIS FRASER**, DIRECTOR OF INDIGENOUS AND RURAL RELATIONS



tansi, etłanet'e, and hello.

As we present the final update to *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*, I find myself reflecting not only on the progress made this past year, but on how much has changed since this work first began.

At that time, the Municipality set out to better understand its role and responsibility in reconciliation; to listen, to build relationships, and to begin identifying where meaningful action could take place. That work continues to grow and evolve.

Today, reconciliation is more clearly reflected in how the Municipality works. It can be seen in the relationships we have built with First Nations and Métis communities across the region, in the way departments across the organization are approaching their work, and in the systems and processes that continue to support more consistent and respectful engagement.

By 2025, we reached an important milestone. Protocol Agreements are now in place with all six First Nations and

all six Métis communities in the region. These agreements reflect a shared commitment to working together in a way that respects each community's priorities, voices, and ways of knowing.

At the same time, much of the progress we have seen is reflected in quieter, everyday actions. Staff across the organization are creating space to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their work and approaching their roles with greater awareness and intention. These shifts, while not always visible, are helping create lasting change.

This report marks the conclusion of the original reporting cycle under *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*. It also marks a transition. The foundation that has been built over the past four years positions the Municipality to continue this work in a more integrated and consistent way.

I would like to thank the First Nations and Métis communities, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers who continue to share their knowledge, guidance, and time so generously. I also want to recognize the staff across the Municipality who are contributing to this work in ways both large and small.

Reconciliation moves forward through relationships, through action, and through a shared commitment to doing this work in a good way.

kinanâskomitin, marsi cho, thank you,

—

Dennis Fraser



PROGRESS ON ADOPTED CALLS TO ACTION

The Municipality continues to advance its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action through action, partnership, and ongoing advocacy.

Since 2021, the number of adopted Calls to Action has expanded from 29 to 33, reflecting a growing understanding of where municipal efforts can have a meaningful and practical impact within the region.

Over time, this work has evolved from building awareness and strengthening relationships to embedding reconciliation more consistently across the organization. This includes the development of policies, the establishment of formal agreements, the delivery of programs, and continued collaboration with First Nations and Métis communities.

The following sections highlight both the progress made since 2021 and the actions taken in 2025, demonstrating how this work is being carried forward in a more coordinated and intentional way.

While the Municipality formally recognizes 33 Calls to Action as areas it can directly support, the work does not stop there. The Municipality remains committed to moving beyond the 94 Calls to Action by continuing to respond to community priorities, strengthen relationships, and take action in ways that reflect the realities and needs of the Wood Buffalo region.

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo: Adopted Calls to Action

1.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by: i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations. ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside. iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools. iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing. v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
3.	We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.
5.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.
7.	We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8.	We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
11.	We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.
13.	We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.



14.	We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles: i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them. ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties. iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal language revitalization and preservation. iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities. v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.
16.	We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
17.	We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.
22.	We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.
23.	We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.
31.	We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.
40.	We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

43.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
45.	We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments: i. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius. ii. Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. iii. Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future. iv. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation.
47.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.
53.	We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation.
55.	We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.
57.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

64.	We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
66.	We call upon the federal government to establish multiyear funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.
69.	We call upon Library and Archives Canada to: i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Orontlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools. ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public. iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.
75.	We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.
77.	We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
79.	We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.
82.	We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

87.	We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
88.	We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
91.	We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.
92.	We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.
93.	We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.





Child Welfare, Family Supports and Education Foundations (Calls 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, and 12)

1.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by: i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations. ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside. iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools. iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing. v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
3.	We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.
5.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.
7.	We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8.	We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
11.	We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12.	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

Since 2021, the Municipality has recognized that while many of these Calls to Action fall outside direct municipal jurisdiction, it still has a role to play in supporting the wellbeing of children, families, and youth through advocacy, partnerships, funding streams, and community-based programming.

Early work focused on reviewing the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program, which is funded through a provincial-municipal partnership, and applying a reconciliation lens to municipal grant streams such as the Community Investment Program. The purpose of this work was to help ensure funded programs better reflected Indigenous inclusion, meaningful engagement, and community priorities. This approach was visible in the 2022 Annual Update, which linked Calls to Action 1, 3, and 5 to advocacy for childcare support in rural and Indigenous communities, as well as the use of FCSS and the Community Investment Program to support preventative, family-focused services.

Over time, this work has continued to take shape through action that is practical and community-based. FCSS has remained an important mechanism for strengthening individual, family, and community wellbeing, while the Municipality has also advocated to the Province for appropriate childcare staffing and resources in rural and Indigenous communities. Support for Aunties in Reach has helped increase access to cultural supports for Indigenous women and expectant parents in the region.

The Municipality has also supported educational and employment pathways through partnerships such as CAREERS Next Generation, including the creation of a dedicated summer student position within Indigenous and Rural Relations, and through support to the Wood Buffalo Regional Library, including Tech on Wheels, which helps bring laptops, tablets, data hubs, printing, scanning, and résumé support into rural communities. Together, these efforts reflect a growing municipal contribution to family wellbeing, early support, youth development, and equitable opportunity.





Language and Culture (Calls 13, 14, 16, and 17)

13.	We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.
14.	We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles: i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them. ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties. iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal language revitalization and preservation. iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities. v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.
16.	We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
17.	We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

Since 2021, the Municipality has worked alongside First Nations and Métis partners, and language leaders to support efforts in revitalization, visibility, and honouring the Cree and Dene languages across the region. Early work included the installation of Treaty 8 and Métis Territory signs on Highways 63 and 881, continued support for National Indigenous Languages Day, and the use of Cree and Dene on new municipal signs and infrastructure where feasible. This commitment was reinforced through a Municipal proclamation declaring

the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and through ongoing work with Facilities Services and local traditional language leaders to honour Cree and Dene languages in municipal buildings.

Over time, this work has grown into something more visible and more embedded in municipal practice. The Municipality continues to explore the feasibility of producing documents affecting majority First Nations and Métis communities in Cree and Dene, and

language is increasingly reflected in public signage, placemaking, and naming. This work is further supported through the establishment of a Cultural Advisor role, helping guide the integration of language, culture, and community knowledge across municipal work.

In 2023, 2024, and 2025, the Municipality supported National Indigenous Languages Day events in Fort Chipewyan. In 2025 it supported Mikişew Cree First Nation's event at Mamawi Community Hall, where cultural teachings, storytelling, and intergenerational learning celebrated the strength and resilience of Cree and Dene. As part of that event, Mayor Bowman presented a proclamation in Cree and Dene, recognizing the connection between language, identity, culture, and community. This work continues to reflect an ongoing commitment to supporting Indigenous languages in ways guided by community priorities and carried out in a good way.



Mayor Sandy Bowman joined Indigenous and Rural Relations, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Mikişew Cree First Nation, and Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation in Fort Chipewyan to celebrate National Indigenous Languages Day on March 31, 2025. The Municipality supported Mikişew Cree First Nation in hosting the event for a third year, bringing community together to celebrate language and culture.



“Our stories teach us who we are, how to live, and how to respect one another and the land.”

— Elder Rita Marten



Health and Healing (Calls 22 and 23)

22.	We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.
23.	We call upon all levels of government to: i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field. ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities. iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.

Since 2021, the Municipality has supported health and healing in ways that are grounded in relationship, cultural respect, and community-led learning. While the Municipality does not lead the health-care system, it has contributed by creating space for Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and practices to be recognized and shared within municipal settings.

Early examples included collaboration between Indigenous and Rural Relations and the Human Resources Health and Safety branch to develop internal staff workshops with local Knowledge Keepers, helping to

build understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and healing in the workplace.

That same approach has continued through community-led gatherings, staff learning opportunities, and support for events where ceremony, Elder guidance, and cultural knowledge are central. In this way, the Municipality's contribution has been to create conditions where Indigenous healing practices are respected, visible, and supported, while continuing to strengthen relationships with communities and Knowledge Keepers.



Justice (Calls 31 and 40)

31.	We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.
40.	We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

Since 2021, the Municipality’s work related to justice has focused on supporting community-led approaches to safety, healing, and prevention, while contributing to broader efforts that address the root causes of harm experienced by First Nations and Métis peoples.

Early progress under Call to Action 31 included the introduction of restorative justice in Wood Buffalo in 2022, with Indigenous and Rural Relations staff participating in training. This work reflects a shift toward approaches that focus on healing, accountability, and community-based solutions, rather than solely punitive responses.

Building on this foundation, the Municipality’s work has continued to evolve through stronger partnerships and coordinated efforts under Call to Action 40. In response to the ongoing impacts of violence, the Municipality supported the creation of the Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP) Taskforce, which brings together Indigenous organizations, service providers, and community partners to co-create and deliver prevention programs, education, and awareness initiatives.



In partnership with the MMEIP Taskforce, Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) and the Nistawoyou Friendship Centre, the Municipality commemorated the National Day of Awareness and Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People on May 5, 2025.





Since its establishment, the MMEIP Taskforce has continued to work collectively to respond to the violence experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the region and to address broader systemic challenges. This work has included community engagement, partnerships, and public-facing initiatives that raise awareness and create space for dialogue and action.

In 2023, this included an art gallery hosted at Jubilee Municipal Building, as well as community gatherings held across the region, providing opportunities for reflection, learning, and connection.

This work has continued to grow through strong partnerships with the Athabasca Tribal Council and the Nistawayou Friendship Centre. On Red Dress Day, the Municipality partnered to support a community-wide Solidarity Walk and Gathering, and on Sisters in Spirit Day, supported gatherings that honoured those impacted and created space for remembrance.

In 2024 and 2025, this work continued to deepen. The Municipality partnered with the Athabasca Tribal Council and Nistawayou Friendship Centre to commemorate the National Day of Awareness and Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People, and supported the ongoing work of the MMEIP Taskforce, including annual gatherings and Sisters in Spirit Day ceremonies on October 4.

In 2025, the Municipality supported the MMEIP Taskforce Gathering, which brought together families, Elders, and community members for healing sessions, information sharing, talking circles, and community-led art. On May 5, the community came together for a full day of ceremony and remembrance, including a pipe ceremony, remarks from leaders and Elders, a solidarity walk, a community feast, and a memorial round dance.



Across this work, the Municipality's role has been to support and partner in ways that ensure community voices, lived experience, and ceremony remain at the centre. This includes providing coordination, resources, and space, while supporting Indigenous-led initiatives that address safety, healing, and prevention.

Through these efforts, the Municipality continues to contribute to broader work aligned with both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

and the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, while strengthening relationships and supporting community-led approaches to justice and wellbeing.



Land Rights and Shared Stewardship (Calls 43, 45, and 47)

43.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
45.	We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments: i. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius. ii. Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. iii. Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future. iv. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation.
47.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.



Since 2021, the Municipality has been working to better understand how land, rights, and relationships intersect within a municipal context. Early efforts focused on building a stronger foundation rooted in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the understanding that reconciliation requires more than engagement. It requires changes to how decisions are made, how relationships are built, and how communities are meaningfully involved.

Over time, this work has taken shape through both policy and practice. The Municipality created the Reconciliation Advisory Circle to bring together Elders, partners, and community leaders to help guide municipal work, and has committed to assessing how UNDRIP can be applied within municipal policies, plans, and decision-making processes. These efforts reflect a growing shift toward approaches grounded in respect, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

This shift is also reflected in the formalization of relationships across the region. The Municipality has established Protocol Agreements with all First Nations and Métis communities in the region, providing a shared framework for engagement, decision-making, and collaboration. By 2025, this represents a significant milestone and reflects a collective commitment to working together in a more coordinated and intentional way.

Progress has also been made in strengthening service relationships. In 2025, the Municipality finalized a Municipal Service Agreement with Fort McMurray 468 First Nation (FMFN 468). With this agreement in place, the Municipality now has Municipal Service Agreements with all First Nations communities in the region, supporting a more consistent and transparent approach to service delivery and coordination.

Land-related decisions have also played an important role in advancing this work.

The Municipality has supported Additions to Reserve processes for Fort McKay First Nation and Smith's Landing First Nation, as well as the transfer of land to McMurray Métis to support the future development of a Métis Cultural Centre. These actions reflect a willingness to address land-related matters in ways that support community priorities and long-term development.

At the policy level, the Municipality has taken steps to address historical land-related inequities and strengthen long-term approaches to land and governance. This includes the adoption of the Historical Indigenous Residential Land Policy, which recognizes the lasting impacts of historical challenges related to Indigenous residential land ownership and title. Additional work has included updates to the Community Identification System, naming policies, and the incorporation of Cree and Dene language into municipal naming and infrastructure, helping ensure that the land reflects the histories, identities, and presence of First Nations and Métis communities.

This approach is also reflected in how the Municipality responds to concerns raised directly from the land.

The Embarras River and Mud Lake, located within the Peace-Athabasca Delta near Fort Chipewyan, are part of a landscape where changes are closely observed by those who live and work on the land. An Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation trapper and Elder raised concerns about ongoing environmental changes within his trapline, including the continued drainage of Mud Lake and the impacts on the surrounding ecosystem.

In response, the Municipality undertook a technical review to better understand the changes taking place. As this understanding grew, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation supported and elevated these concerns, and the Municipality worked alongside the Nation and the Elder to review a path forward focused on restoring more natural conditions within the area.

While there was no regulatory requirement for the Municipality to undertake this work, the decision to move forward was guided by something more important. The Municipality responded to community, honoured relationships, and worked in partnership with First Nations and Métis communities. This reflects a shift toward relationship-based decision-making, where both technical knowledge and Indigenous knowledge are recognized, and where community voices help shape outcomes.

Together, these actions reflect a more consistent and grounded approach to land, rights, and shared stewardship, one that continues to evolve through relationships, policy, and practice.



Governance, Accountability and Public Service Learning (Calls 53, 55, and 57)

53.	We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation.
55.	We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.
57.	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

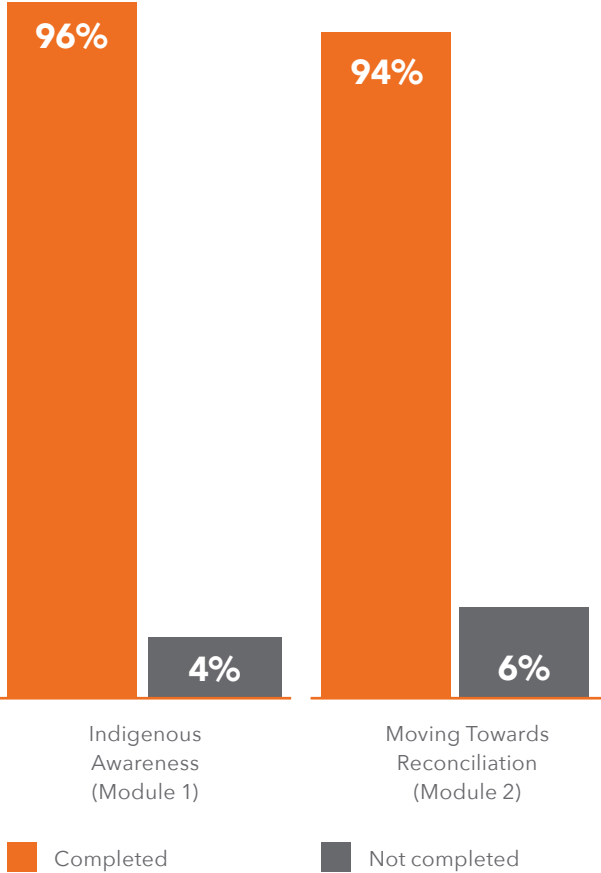
Since 2021, the Municipality has committed to strengthening accountability and internal learning as part of its response to truth and reconciliation. That work began with the development of the Indigenous eLearning Series, mandatory Indigenous awareness training for staff, the Blanket Exercise, workshops on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Elder-in-Residence Program. Those efforts created an early foundation for awareness, reflection, and ongoing learning both inside and outside the organization.

In 2023, the Municipality broadened its organizational response through the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Champions, an interdepartmental working group with Terms of Reference and alignment to Council reporting cycles. By 2024 and 2025, learning had expanded further through the Truth and Reconciliation

Challenge, additional land-based and cultural training opportunities, an anti-racism policy, and the sharing of challenge materials with external partners such as Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism, the Fort McMurray Airport, and Wood Buffalo Housing.

By 2025, participation in foundational training has become both widespread and consistent. A total of 96% of employees completed Indigenous Awareness Online Module 1, establishing a strong baseline understanding of Indigenous history, perspectives, and the ongoing impacts of colonization. Participation in Moving Towards Reconciliation Online Module 2 also remained high, with 94% of employees completing the training. Together, these results reflect a significant level of engagement across the organization and reflect a collective commitment to learning and doing better.

RMWB STAFF COMPLETION RATES BY TRAINING MODULE



By 2025, reconciliation learning and accountability had become part of how the Municipality learns and carries the work forward.

LEARNING MILESTONES

- 2021
Foundational Staff Learning Begins
- 2023
Truth and Reconciliation Champions Formed
- 2024 – 2025
Learning Expands Across the Organization

The 2025 report also marks the completion of the first four-year reporting cycle under *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*, reflecting a clear commitment to annual reporting and organizational accountability. In this way, governance, reporting, and staff learning have become more integrated parts of how the Municipality carries reconciliation forward.



Public Education, Youth Programming and Community Awareness (Calls 64, 66, and 69)

64.	We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
66.	We call upon the federal government to establish multiyear funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.
69.	We call upon Library and Archives Canada to: i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Ortentlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools. ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public. iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.



Elder Robert Cree at the 2025 launch of his memoir, *The Many Names of Robert Cree*, joined by actor Lorne Cardinal, who voiced the audiobook edition of the memoir.





The screening of *Sweet Summer Pow Wow*, a film featuring Fort McMurray-raised actress Tatyana Baptiste, brought community together through film, followed by cultural performances that celebrated Indigenous storytelling, talent, and connection.

Since 2021, the Municipality has increasingly supported public education and youth engagement as important parts of reconciliation. Early work included a commitment to explore youth employment and training opportunities for Indigenous high school students, and in 2023 that became tangible through a partnership with CAREERS Next Generation and the creation of a dedicated summer student position within Indigenous and Rural Relations. That initiative helped create firsthand municipal work experience for Indigenous youth while also strengthening cultural pride and connection to community.

The Municipality has also strengthened public education and awareness through partnerships with the Wood Buffalo Regional Library. In 2024, the Municipality formally adopted Call to Action 69, recognizing and formalizing the work already underway through *It's Time to Read* and other library-based programming focused on Indigenous voices, histories, and contemporary issues.

In 2024, the series featured Richard Van Camp's *Three Feathers* and related film and programming, while in 2025 it continued with events such as *Sweet Summer Pow Wow*, *Inkonze: The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, and *The Many Names of Robert Cree*. Together, these efforts help make Indigenous stories, truth-telling, and community education more visible and accessible across the region.

The Municipality has also continued to support public-facing learning and community events that create space for residents to gather, celebrate, and deepen their understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and relationships. Events such as National Indigenous Peoples Day, film screenings, author events, and community programming have helped make reconciliation more visible and accessible across the region. These events support learning in a way that is welcoming, community-based, and grounded in relationship.



Commemoration, Archives and Residential School Legacy (Calls 75, 77, 79, and 82)

75.	We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.
77.	We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
79.	We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.
82.	We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

Since 2021, commemoration has remained one of the strongest and most visible areas of the Municipality's reconciliation work. Early commitments included adopting Calls to Action 75, 77, and 79, and later formally adopting Call to Action 82.

Work in this area has included the Heritage Plaque Program, Indigenous reconciliation artworks in Council Chambers, the naming of kiyām Community Park, and ongoing commitments to ensure local Indigenous histories and cultures are reflected through wayfinding, design, educational elements, and commemorative practices.



The opening of kiyām Community Park is one example of how commemoration, place-naming, and public spaces can support remembrance, truth-telling, and stronger recognition of local Indigenous histories.



The Municipality has also continued to recognize Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation through opportunities for learning, reflection, and remembrance. These activities help honour residential school Survivors, families, and the children who did not return home, while supporting a broader understanding of the ongoing impacts of residential schools in the region and across Canada.

This work has deepened in response to the legacy of Holy Angels Residential School in Fort Chipewyan and the need for community-led healing, remembrance, and truth-telling. Since 2021, the Municipality has supported community-led initiatives focused on Survivors, families, and the children who did not return home.

This has included municipal participation in healing and commemoration gatherings, support for the Selotine Nitotemak

community-led commemoration process connected to the former Holy Angels Residential School grounds, and continued involvement in related engagement, remembrance, and search-related work.

In 2025, Council directed Administration to engage with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation, and other community partners to gather feedback on the design, location, and scope of a monument in Fort Chipewyan to honour residential school Survivors, in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Together, these efforts reflect a commitment to remembrance, truth-telling, archival responsibility, and community-guided commemoration.



Sports and Youth (Calls 87, 88, and 91)

87.	We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
88.	We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
91.	We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.



Since 2021, the Municipality has supported reconciliation through sport by creating space not only to recognize Indigenous athletes, but to share Indigenous stories, knowledge, and community connections through sport.

This work became especially visible through the 2023 Arctic Winter Games, where Indigenous territorial protocols, cultural programming, and community leadership were meaningfully integrated throughout the event. Cultural galas, a cultural feast, and pop-up exhibitions created opportunities for participants and visitors to engage with Indigenous histories, including the legacy of residential schools and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People.

As part of this legacy, the Municipality developed the Indigenous Sports Gallery, not as a static display, but as a living platform for storytelling.



The gallery shares the stories of Indigenous athletes, community builders, and local role models, highlighting their contributions to sport, culture, and community across the region.

Since its creation, the gallery has been actively shared across communities, extending its reach beyond a single event. In 2024, a formal induction ceremony brought together athletes, families, and community members in a space of recognition and celebration. In 2025, the gallery continued to travel, including being shared at Métis Fest, Holy Trinity School during the Provincial Basketball Tournament, and within the community of Fort Chipewyan. These opportunities helped youth and community members engage directly with the stories being shared.

The Indigenous Sports Gallery is celebrated every two years, allowing new stories and contributions to be recognized over time. In 2026, the Municipality will celebrate a new group of Indigenous athletes, community builders, and local legends, continuing to honour the role of sport in strengthening identity, visibility, wellness, and community connection.

This approach reflects a shift from recognition alone to storytelling, visibility, and community connection. By bringing the gallery into schools, tournaments, and communities, the Municipality is helping ensure that Indigenous youth see themselves reflected in sport, and that these stories are experienced where people gather, learn, and compete.



Business and Reconciliation, Newcomer Awareness and Broader Community Learning (Calls 92 and 93)

92.	We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.
93.	We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

Since 2021, economic reconciliation has evolved from engagement and relationship-building into more structured and action-oriented work. In 2022, a working group including Indigenous community-owned businesses and the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) began advancing an Indigenous procurement framework for the Municipality.

In 2023 and 2024, that work expanded through the Indigenous Economic Action Committee, the Wood Buffalo economic roundtable, allyship training, and the Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Information Partnership, which brought together Indigenous and regional partners to share information and funding opportunities. The transition of Rural Operations from Public Works to Indigenous and Rural Relations in 2024 further supported equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in rural and Indigenous areas.

By 2025, this work had become more visible through the Indigenous Procurement Strategy, the development of an Indigenous vendor database, procurement information sessions, and continued partnerships with NAABA, Keyano College, and Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism. At the same time, Call to Action 93 has been supported through the Municipality’s publicly available online learning modules and through the opportunity to deepen relationships with newcomer-serving organizations such as the Wood Buffalo Local Immigration Partnership and the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo. Together, these efforts reflect a broader approach to reconciliation that includes economic participation, workplace learning, public education, and a more inclusive understanding of Indigenous histories and relationships for all who call the region home.





LOOKING **AHEAD**

The completion of this report marks the end of the original reporting cycle under *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*, but not the end of the work.

Over the past four years, the Municipality has moved from establishing commitments to embedding reconciliation more consistently within relationships, decision-making, service delivery, and internal practices. This has created a stronger foundation for continued collaboration with First Nations and Métis governments and communities.

Moving forward, the Municipality will focus on maintaining momentum, improving coordination, and supporting community-driven priorities through policies, partnerships, agreements, learning opportunities, and day-to-day municipal work.

Reconciliation requires ongoing listening, learning, and action. The Municipality remains committed to carrying this work forward in a way that is respectful, relationship-based, and responsive to the people and communities of the Wood Buffalo region.



Spirits Having Flown - 2



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO