

OFFICE OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF MANDATE 2011-12

April 1, 2011

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present the *Statement of Mandate* for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for 2011-12.

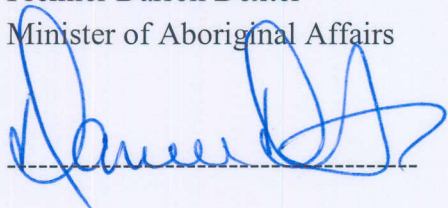
The Nova Scotia government is committed to working in partnership with the Mi'kmaq to build a better Nova Scotia, one that reflects the rich culture and history of Nova Scotia's first people and supports a prosperous future for the Mi'kmaq of today and the generations to come. We will continue to work at a local, provincial and national level to increase economic opportunity and social prosperity.

The work of the Office is vital to the future prosperity of Nova Scotia and to ensuring strong and stable relations with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. Like all governments, Nova Scotia is facing significant fiscal and economic challenges in the coming few years. Despite this we will continue to make progress on addressing Aboriginal and treaty rights through the Made-in-Nova Scotia negotiation process and develop ever more effective processes in support of government's obligation to consult with the Mi'kmaq. We will also continue to utilize the Tripartite Forum to build stronger linkages between governments and Mi'kmaq communities and organizations and foster collaborative solutions on social and economic matters. In the coming year, the Office will work with the Aboriginal community on measures that help create good jobs and grow the economy.

In the short term, these efforts support the priorities of government and will help position the province as we get back to balance. In the longer term, our efforts will help to build a better, more inclusive Nova Scotia.

Wela'lin

Premier Darrell Dexter
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

A blue ink signature of Premier Darrell Dexter, written over a horizontal dashed line.

Judith Sullivan-Corney
CEO/Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Affairs

A purple ink signature of Judith Sullivan-Corney, written over a horizontal dashed line.

Mandate, Mission and Vision

The *Mandate* of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) is to promote a coordinated approach within government on matters related to Aboriginal people, represent the interests of the Province in intergovernmental, multilateral initiatives and negotiations and provide research, analysis and policy advice to government on Aboriginal issues.

It is the *Mission* of the OAA to lead Nova Scotia in Aboriginal Affairs by building mutual understanding, respect and a lasting relationship.

The *Vision* of the OAA is:

Partnership-Negotiation-Direction

On our journey toward fair and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal Peoples, we strive to build an inclusive, informed and prosperous Nova Scotia.

Government Priorities

Government has set a clear path with three key priorities. This section outlines how OAA will support these priorities in the coming year.

1. Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

Like all departments and agencies of government, OAA is reducing spending over the next three years to help government get back to balance. A key measure being taken by OAA to assist in meeting these targets will be the co-location with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. This action will lead to staffing and operational efficiencies that will save government approximately \$1 million over the next seven years.

2. Make health care better for you and your family

OAA will continue to work with our Mi'kmaq partners and the federal government to improve health outcomes for Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum.

We are also supporting the efforts of the Department of Health and Wellness in developing and implementing a Mi'kmaq Health Policy Framework, implementing the Aboriginal Continuing Care Forum and increasing physical activity in First Nations communities.

3. Create good jobs and grow the economy

Mi'kmaq communities have the youngest and fastest growing population in the province. With half the population under the age of 25 there is no question that government needs to work closely with Mi'kmaq communities and organizations to improve employment and economic outcomes. To that end, OAA is pursuing a number of priority actions to support this work.

A key objective of the Made-in-Nova Scotia negotiation process is to improve economic opportunity for the Mi'kmaq. This will be accomplished by supporting good governance - a recognized cornerstone of Aboriginal economic development; creating greater investment certainty by clarifying Aboriginal/Mi'kmaq Rights and Title in Nova Scotia; and increasing the capacity of Mi'kmaq communities to take advantage of economic opportunity.

The consultation terms of reference signed in August of 2010 provides a framework for a streamlined consultation process that formally integrates Mi'kmaq interests and concerns in government decision-making. It has and will continue to facilitate economic development opportunities by linking First Nations with business interests in Nova Scotia.

The province through its support in 2010-11 of a Mi'kmaq Major Resource and Energy Fund and the development of a Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy has created a foundation for future economic opportunity for the Mi'kmaq in the renewable energy sector. We will also continue to support economic development in individual Mi'kmaq communities through First Nation Gaming Agreements. These agreements provide approximately \$50 million annually to Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia which in turn are used to support economic and community development like those seen in Membertou and Millbrook First Nations. With respect to creating good jobs, OAA will work in cooperation with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education and our Mi'kmaq partners to continue the work of the Aboriginal Employability Table and ensure the necessary supports are in place for this young and growing segment of Nova Scotian society.

OAA is also working with the federal government, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and Aboriginal partners in the HRM to develop an Urban Aboriginal Network to better link Aboriginal service providers together and to allow for more effective coordination of government's efforts to address the social and economic needs of the Aboriginal community in HRM.

Performance Measures

Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Relations				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2011/12 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
The interests of Nova Scotians in inter-governmental, tripartite, and bilateral initiatives and negotiations are effectively represented	Increase in the percentage of government departments and agencies who agree that OAA effectively represents Nova Scotian's interests.	Inter-departmental Survey 2010 - 92% strongly agree/agree 2005 - 96% strongly agree/agree	To increase the % of respondents who strongly agree/agree to 96%.	-Ongoing participation and coordination of provincial role in the Mi'kmaq-Canada-Nova Scotia Tripartite Forum and the Made-in-Nova Scotia negotiation process. -Ongoing participation and involvement in national (Aboriginal Affairs Working Group) and regional initiatives.
Improved relations between the Government of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal communities and organizations.	Increase in the percentage of departments and agencies who are satisfied with their working relationship with Aboriginal communities and organizations.	Inter-departmental Survey 2010 - 91% were satisfied/somewhat satisfied 2005 - 80% were satisfied/somewhat satisfied	To increase the % of respondents who are satisfied/somewhat satisfied to 95%.	-Ongoing identification and coordination of cross- departmental Aboriginal issues. -Continuation of strategic advice and policy analysis to departments and agencies. -Working with departments and agencies to apply national strategies to provincial approaches.

Coordination and Policy Advice				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2011/12 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Coordination and advice being provided to departments and agencies that is effective.	Departments and agencies satisfaction with the advice and support provided by OAA.	Interdepartmental Survey 2010 - 75% were satisfied 2005 - 75% were satisfied	80%	Development of a Aboriginal Policy Framework for Nova Scotia Provide research and policy advice that is timely, accurate and useful.

Negotiations				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2011/12 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Enhanced clarity on Mi'kmaq rights, title and treaty-related issues; improved and stable relations; and reduced social and economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq.	All parties remain committed to the 2007 Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia Framework Agreement and make progress, including interim arrangements on priority negotiation topics.	Work plans and progress reports	Conclude arrangements with the Mi'kmaq on a number of topics.	Monthly Main Table meetings with federal and Mi'kmaq negotiation teams, and working groups on key topics

Public Education and Awareness				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2011/12 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
An enhanced level of awareness and understanding of Aboriginal issues in Nova Scotia.	An increasing percentage of Nova Scotian's who feel informed and knowledgeable of Aboriginal issues in Nova Scotia.	Regular survey data 41% of Nova Scotians feel informed (2009 base year)	Increase of 10% in Nova Scotians who feel informed about Aboriginal issues in Nova Scotia.	Develop and implement strategies to enhance Nova Scotian's understanding and awareness of issues related to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia.
	An increasing percentage of government employees who strongly agree that OAA enhances awareness of Mi'kmaq culture.	Interdepartmental survey 2010 - 35% strongly agreed. 2005 – 33% strongly agreed	Increase in the percentage of government employees who strongly agree to 40%.	Develop and implement strategies to enhance employee's understanding and awareness of issues related to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia.

Consultation				
Outcome	Measure	Base Year Data	2011-12 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Consultation between the provincial government and the Mi'kmaq that is effective, transparent and efficient	Consultation Terms of Reference - to address consultation between the Mi'kmaq, Canada and NS for government approvals and activities that may impact Aboriginal or Treaty Rights.	Terms of Reference formally signed in August 2010	Canada-NS Memorandum of Collaboration	Draft MOU and joint workplan Bi-monthly consultation meetings Coordinate/facilitate consultations between the Mi'kmaq and various provincial departments on key projects.
Capacity to undertake consultation efforts within other provincial government departments is improved	Interim Policy Guidance on Consultation	Work progress Enhanced set of consultation tools and risk assessment approach for consultation.	Training and learning seminars Departmental operational consultation guidelines Written risk assessments completed	Identify and deliver targeted training sessions to specific departments and the broader stakeholder groups. Provide templates, advice, on operational guidelines. Timely completion of risk assessments

Budget Context

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS			
	2010-2011 Estimate	2010-2011 Forecast	2011-2012 Estimate
Program and Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Total Program Expenses:			
Aboriginal Affairs	\$4,115	\$4,115	\$4,195
Total Program Expenses	\$4,115	\$4,115	\$4,195
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	15.0	13.7	14.0