



# Accountability Report 2020–21

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Aboriginal Affairs



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Accountability Report 2020–2021

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# Table of Contents

- Accountability Statement ..... 2
- Message from Minister and CEO ..... 3
- Financial Results ..... 4
- Measuring Our Performance ..... 4
  - Collaborative Partnerships to Improve Social and Economic Prosperity of Indigenous Communities ..... 4
  - Effective Coordination and Strategic Policy Advice to Nova Scotia Government ..... 6
  - Coordinated Approach to Ensure Government Meets its Legal Consultation Obligations..... 7
  - Made-in-Nova Scotia Process: Mi'kmaq Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Negotiations ..... 9
  - Treaty Education and Enhanced Public Awareness..... 10
- Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act..... 12

## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for the year ended March 31, 2021 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Statement of Mandate and Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Office of Aboriginal Affairs 2020-21 Business Plan.

*Original signed by*

Honourable Karla MacFarlane  
Minister, Office of L'nu Affairs

*Original signed by*

Justin Huston  
Deputy Head, Office of L'nu Affairs

## Message from Minister and CEO

We are pleased to present the Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs accountability report for 2020-21. The accountability report is an opportunity to highlight departmental accomplishments while responding to commitments listed in the 2020-21 statement of mandate and business plan.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) continues to work closely with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, promoting a collaborative approach in responding to challenges faced and opportunities for growth for Indigenous peoples in Nova Scotia. Aboriginal Affairs leads rights-based negotiations related to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and the federal government; coordinates and facilitates consultation between the provincial government and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia; and provides strategic policy advice to government while exploring options to help foster social and economic prosperity in Indigenous communities.

Treaty Education continues to create an opportunity to develop innovative and reconciliatory methods for learning about our shared history and responsibilities by promoting a deeper understanding of our shared treaty relationship. Treaty Day and Mi'kmaq History Month provide specific opportunities to commemorate the role of treaties in the relationship between the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the Crown. Provincial and Mi'kmaq officials continue to work together to develop specific Treaty Education programs and services for the education system, the provincial civil service and the broader public.

Over the past year, we continued to take a coordinated and collaborative approach in delivering our core functions and are pleased with progress made in several areas. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, OAA was able to shift work to an online format, ensuring minimal disruptions. For example, all consultation meetings with the Mi'kmaq, provincial and federal regulators and project proponents were held virtually and our established in-person Duty to Consult training shifted to a series of virtual modules. We maintained a close collaboration with Mi'kmaq communities, organizations, and leadership with a goal of strengthening relationships across the province. We continued to provide policy advice while collaborating with partners across government on intergovernmental and multi-lateral issues. These include issues as they relate to the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Report on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. Reconciliation must be based on trust and mutual respect; therefore, a collaborative approach in responding to these calls is necessary.

Increasing collaboration and commitments at the federal level has further strengthened work at the provincial level. The challenges faced by Nova Scotia's Indigenous population today are complex and long standing; responding to these challenges require a coordinated approach and expertise in many subject areas. In 2020-21, we continued to collectively pursue solutions to these challenges in promoting a thriving Nova Scotia for all.

In February 2021, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs changed its name to the Office of L'nu Affairs to better reflect the unique and important relationship between the Province and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, as well as the other Indigenous communities and organizations we work with. This was done to recognize the importance of the Mi'kmaw language, culture, and identity. *L'nu* is a Mi'kmaw word meaning "the people" and refers primarily, but not exclusively, to the Mi'kmaq people.

## Financial Results

Office of Aboriginal Affairs	2020-2021 Estimate	2020-2021 Actuals	2020-2021 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
Office of Aboriginal Affairs	4,362	4,302	(60)
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>4,362</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>(60)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,000	21.5	(978.5)
Provincially Funded Staff (FTEs)	17.0	16.1	0.9
<p><b><u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u></b>            Variance primarily due to lower than budgeted travel expenses (COVID-19 related)</p> <p><b><u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u></b>            Actual TCA spending was lower than estimate due to COVID-19 restrictions limiting the ability to purchase land</p> <p><b><u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u></b>            Variance due to temporarily vacant positions</p>			

## Measuring Our Performance

### Collaborative Partnerships to Improve Social and Economic Prosperity of Indigenous Communities

Throughout the past year, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) continued to identify and support opportunities to improve social and economic prosperity for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous peoples and communities in Nova Scotia. This work increases participation of Indigenous people in the workforce and strengthens the provincial economy, supporting inclusive economic growth. Economic development, education, and employment opportunities are enhanced through collaboration with Mi'kmaq communities and organizations, other provincial departments, federal departments, the Tripartite Forum and other partners. Economic development led by Mi'kmaq communities and organizations is focused on building and supporting social enterprise and community investment through innovative initiatives that address complex gaps and emerging opportunities. This supports increased community capacity and connectedness, economic development and growth, and employment and skills development that improve the prosperity of Indigenous people and all Nova Scotians.

OAA continues to work collaboratively with a variety of funding partners through two grant funding streams: *Strategic Funding Initiatives* and the *Aboriginal Community Development Fund (ACDF)*. This strategic pooling and distribution of resources for major initiatives and community economic development projects allows OAA to successfully leverage funds federally, inter-departmentally, and from other external stakeholders. The ACDF is a funding stream of \$75,000, which supported

several community-led initiatives whose combined total project budget was more than \$600,000. The ACDF stream supports community-led initiatives with economic and business development outcomes and benefits. This fund specifically leverages other resources within and outside of government to support projects and initiatives that are community-led. Some examples of projects funded in 2020-21 include:

- Funding to Glooscap Ventures to contribute toward development of a First Nation owned and operated workplace safety training and auditing business.
- Funding to Glooscap Energy to contribute toward the installation and operation of a solar panel array on Seakist Lobster, a lobster holding facility 100% owned by Glooscap First Nation. The solar array generates electricity and revenue for Glooscap First Nation which, in turn, is used to further economic development opportunities for the Community.
- Funding to Pictou Landing First Nation to contribute toward the cost of the commercial office complex business plan to maximize opportunities associated with the Boat Harbour Remediation Project.
- Continued funding to Sipekne'katik for the Driver Education and Licensing Program aimed at poverty reduction to improve opportunities for workforce attachment in marginalized communities through addressing transportation barriers for training and employment.
- Special event funding to Ulnooweg Development Group (Ulnooweg) for the Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards Show that raises the profile for Indigenous business, individual entrepreneurs and Ulnooweg.
- Funding to Ulnooweg on behalf of Wskijinu'k Mtmo'taquow Agency (WMA) to conduct a Pre-feasibility Assessment on the viability of a commercial campground development that would be beneficially owned and operated on behalf of all 13 Mi'kmaw communities.
- Funding to the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) to investigate the feasibility of a social enterprise to facilitate bulk buying of building materials and supplies for the five UNSM member communities, thus decreasing purchase costs and, ultimately, allowing for more repairs, new builds and employment for community members.
- Continued support to the KMKNO to implement the nation-approach to cultural tourism in Nova Scotia through Cultural Tourism Strategy for Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw.

Through *Strategic Funding Initiatives* grants and contributions, OAA continues to support a variety of initiatives related to economic development and social prosperity. Some of these include:

- Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSNWA) capacity funding to support leadership and opportunities for Indigenous women in Nova Scotia related to addressing social, emotional, and health concerns and employment and training opportunities;
- Continued support to the NSNWA for the further design and development of their resiliency centre to address social, emotional, economic development, and health related programming and services, specifically responding to the MMIWG Calls for Justice;
- Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, Urban Community Liaison Officer who provides leadership, strategic direction, and expertise to ensure programs and initiatives adhere to the needs to the Urban Indigenous community, as well as continued support in the development of the new centre and a 10-year strategic plan;
- Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (MLSN), which provides culturally appropriate justice-related projects and programs to all Indigenous people residing in Nova Scotia; and,
- Clean Foundation, Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps (NSYCC) Indigenous Leadership Program, which provides training and employment opportunities within the environmental field to 20 Indigenous youth;

- Atlantic Aboriginal Community Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP), which conducts research and builds capacity related to Indigenous economic development; and,
- Ongoing support to the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum to address issues relating to the TRC Calls to Action and include governance, health and wellness, culture and heritage, economic development, education, justice, and sport and recreation.

As a province, our relationship with the Mi'kmaq is critical in building trust, understanding, and cooperation on a wide array of issues, and socio-economic opportunities. We strengthen this relationship through ongoing identification and coordination of cross-departmental issues; managing bilateral relationships with the Mi'kmaq; and fostering intergovernmental relationships with Canada and other provinces.

OAA provides leadership and support to government departments and agencies involved with the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum (TPF). This innovative and collaborative partnership was established in 1997 and continues to grow and adapt to the needs of the community. The TPF seven working committees (Health, Justice, Education, Economic Development, Communities, and Heritage, Social, and Sports and Recreation) are co-chaired by provincial representatives and supported through active participation of over 30 provincial employees. At an operational level, the seven working committees of the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum demonstrate a commitment to practical and tangible progress on issues and opportunities to improve social and economic outcomes for the Mi'kmaq, and the province as a whole. OAA also participates in the Executive and Officials committees that provide overall guidance on TPF governance and activities. The seven working committees are currently focusing on priorities identified through the *Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action*, and related activities such as developing an aftercare model for communities dealing with addictions, developing a process map for instituting by-laws in communities, increasing women and girls participation in sport and recreation activities, and developing Mi'kmaq tourism experiences in Nova Scotia.

### Effective Coordination and Strategic Policy Advice to Nova Scotia Government

A key focus of OAA is to provide effective coordination and policy advice to provincial departments, offices, and agencies. There is also significant dialogue and interface with federal agencies at national and regional levels. To design effective and sustainable corporate practices and solutions, OAA coordinates inter-departmental interests or positions through internal coordination, communication, collaboration, and development of common positions. Several department projects, programs, and initiatives that OAA assisted on included climate change adaptation programming, place names, tourism development, and high-speed internet availability. The Policy Division at OAA leads various engagement files, assisting other departments and organizations on projects, plans, services, and opportunities affecting the Indigenous communities throughout Nova Scotia. The Policy Division successfully helps build and maintain positive working relationships for these departments, organizations, and communities to ensure that priorities and needs that do not fit within formal Consultation continue to be met and addressed.

As Chair of the Senior Officials Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, OAA coordinates with other departments around priorities and complex issues that touch multiple departments. A key priority is identifying actions and programming that address the Truth and Reconciliation



Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action. A *TRC Calls to Action Implementation Plan* was developed and approved by all 13 Chiefs in February 2018. This plan identifies key priority areas for the Mi'kmaq and links this work to the seven working committees of the Tripartite Forum. These committees have committed to this work in their annual work plans to continue addressing and implementing these priorities. As a focal point for the TRC Calls to Action, OAA works with other provincial departments on maintaining an evergreen database to track the work done on provincially-related Calls, with the understanding that this work is ongoing and multi-generational.

OAA continues to provide ongoing coordination and advice with regards to Mi'kmaq gaming agreements, working across government departments with the 13 Mi'kmaq communities, and responding to emerging issues.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, 2020-21 continued to present many issues related to the health and well-being and socio-economic stability for the 13 Mi'kmaw bands, their off-reserve populations, and the general off-reserve Indigenous communities throughout the province. OAA provided support to many bands and organizations that were beginning their response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and provincial state of emergency. The Policy Division specifically worked with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, and the Native Council of Nova Scotia to ensure relationships and connections were kept and maintained so that these organizations could continue to provide essential services and obtain needed supplies for the safety of their staff. OAA worked with organizations and the federal government on funding availability to ensure the most vulnerable populations had access to adequate housing, food, and health care when needed.

### [Coordinated Approach to Ensure Government Meets its Legal Consultation Obligations](#)

In Canada, the Crown has a constitutional obligation to consult with First Nations when contemplating decisions or actions that may adversely impact Aboriginal or Treaty rights. OAA provides policy leadership, guidance and advice to government departments regarding the duty to consult with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and advises on the process to fulfill consultation obligations. With a complex and evolving legal landscape, it is critical that government understands and meets its legal requirements regarding consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

Throughout 2020-21 OAA continued to coordinate provincial consultation between provincial departments, federal agencies, and Mi'kmaq communities on over 250 active files. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all consultation activities, including all consultation meetings between relevant parties shifted to virtual platforms. The Mi'kmaq, through the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNNO) were well organized and responsive to virtual meetings. The Province instituted more flexible consultation timelines where possible and offered extensions to the Mi'kmaq to allow for Covid-19 related limitations.

Ongoing operational support to line departments included: providing consistent advice; coordinating and chairing consultation meetings; maintaining curated consultation records, facilitating virtual targeted training in three regions for 36 staff from the Department of Lands and Forestry; as well as virtually presenting an overview of the provincial consultation approach to key

staff from Transport Canada; policy making; and the development of tools to ensure that departments, offices, and agencies are effectively equipped to lead consultations with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. Specifically, OAA continued to support the Department of Lands and Forestry in developing a draft Regional Services Consultation Protocol and the Department of Energy and Mines on its review of the Mining Consultation Protocol. In 2020-21, OAA also participated in discussions alongside the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage on the development of mapping tools to assist in mitigating potential adverse impacts to Mi'kmaw heritage resources on small infrastructure-related projects including road repairs. In addition to supporting provincial departments, OAA facilitated virtual educational sessions on provincial Crown consultation for the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board and the Mining Association of Nova Scotia

The division also delivers an intensive, one-day training session on The Duty to Consult with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, which is offered through the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission Learning and Development calendar. In 2020-21, to accommodate meeting restrictions due to Covid-19, the Consultation Division revised the in-person Duty to Consult training to a series of virtual modules. In February 2020, twenty-seven public servants participated in the training, which includes a historical overview; consultation from a legal and practical perspective; explanation and application of the Nova Scotia Consultation Terms of Reference; best consultation practices; and concludes with a hands-on, practical consultation screening exercise on real-life cases involving consultation. The work of OAA's Consultation Division is guided by the corporate Consultation Policy and Guidelines (2015) as well as the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Terms of Reference (ToR - 2010).

The Consultation Division has developed and maintains an effective working relationship with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and staff of the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO). Bi-monthly process meetings are held between KMKNO and OLA consultation teams to coordinate and provide updates on all consultation files. OAA is also maintaining relationships, and coordinating consultation with Sipekne'katik and Millbrook First Nations, two Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia that have chosen to consult outside the ToR.

Throughout 2020-21, OAA continued to make additional changes to consultation tools and templates and to fine-tune the proposed enhanced approach to ensure that it aligns with the most recent consultation-related court decisions. OAA is now working with the Department of Justice to incorporate the most current case-law into an enhanced approach to consultation that is aligned with government priorities and policy. OAA will continue to work with departments to implement key aspects of the enhanced consultation approach in 2021-22.

In 2017-2018 the Consultation Division initiated a review of its guidance document entitled *'Proponents Guide: The Role of Proponents in Crown Consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia'*. Interviews were held with potentially impacted parties including proponents, consultants and Mi'kmaq representatives in an effort to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the current guide and to identify any gaps or outdated information. In 2020-21 OAA continued its examination of some of the most recent direction provided by the Courts on proponent delegation and

incorporated key learnings into guidance materials that will inform the development of a new, revised Proponents' Guide. OAA is working to complete an updated Proponents guide in 2021-22.

An Aboriginal Consultation Tracking Database, which assists in efficiently tracking and facilitating activities related to consultation processes with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, was put into operation in 2018-19 with support from ICT Services. The new system assists the Consultation Division in coordinating consultation files, maintains a consistent record of provincial consultations and provides a central location for curated consultation records for complex projects involving multiple departments. In 2019-20, OAA hired an Information Systems Specialist who is now responsible for the maintenance, operation and optimization of the database. OAA's Information Systems Specialist continues to work with ICT Services to update and improve the functionality of the Aboriginal Consultation Tracking Database and to ensure it meets the needs of the Division.

### [Made-in-Nova Scotia Process: Mi'kmaq Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Negotiations](#)

The Made-in-Nova Scotia Process is the formal tripartite Aboriginal and Treaty Rights negotiation process involving Nova Scotia, Canada, and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, as represented by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs through the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiations Office (KMKNO).

This negotiation process allows the three parties to resolve issues related to Mi'kmaq asserted and established Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, including Aboriginal title and Mi'kmaq governance, in a collaborative and interest-based manner. The negotiation process helps maintain and foster a positive and productive relationship between the Province and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia as the parties work toward mutually beneficial short term and long-term negotiated arrangements.

Through the negotiation process, OAA represents Nova Scotia's interests and negotiation goals. These include focusing on enhancing legal clarity on rights issues, improving and maintaining stable relations, and reducing social and economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

During 2020-21, the three parties successfully pivoted to an online negotiation model, which allowed regular negotiations to continue despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and restrictions on in-person meetings. Although public health concerns became the top priority for all three parties throughout the year, the negotiations table proved important during 2020-21, as Mi'kmaq moderate livelihood fishing continued to be a critical issue. Canada and the Mi'kmaq maintained a dedicated bilateral side-table on fish harvesting issues, while matters related to provincial jurisdiction were discussed through the tripartite Main Table. In this way, the three parties preserved an open dialogue throughout the year on this important issue. These discussions will continue into 2021-22, as the parties pursue their shared interest in improving clarity and understanding surrounding Mi'kmaq moderate livelihood fishing rights in Nova Scotia and the appropriate exercise of this Mi'kmaq Treaty right.

In 2020-21, emerging membership changes to Mi'kmaq collective rights organizations and processes created additional challenges to the successful negotiation and implementation of Mi'kmaq Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Nova Scotia. Additional Mi'kmaq First Nations are deciding

whether to advance their Aboriginal and Treaty rights as individual communities, or as part of a united Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia collective. For certain rights topics, this is changing the landscape surrounding the negotiation of Mi'kmaq rights in Nova Scotia. These internal Mi'kmaq decisions could significantly impact how negotiations and consultation occur in Nova Scotia and could significantly increase the complexity of already challenging rights processes.

Despite these challenges, 2020-21 also included many positive developments. The tripartite Made-in-Nova Scotia Process negotiations continued to foster a strong and respectful relationship by maintaining an open dialogue on issues related to Mi'kmaq asserted and established Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Negotiations concerning Mi'kmaq governance over social programs, including child and family services and enhanced social assistance advanced rapidly with broad Mi'kmaq community support.

Looking ahead, the Made-in-Nova Scotia Process will continue to help maintain and foster a positive and productive relationship between the Province and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia on rights issues. The three parties will continue to work toward mutually beneficial short-term and long-term negotiated agreements that advance clarity surrounding Mi'kmaq Aboriginal and Treaty rights and improve social and economic outcomes for Mi'kmaq people, to the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

### Treaty Education and Enhanced Public Awareness

Greater awareness of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous culture and history provides a foundation for positive relations. OAA plays a leadership and coordination role across provincial government to ensure that departments have the tools and information they need to support greater internal and external awareness and appreciation of Mi'kmaq rights, culture, and history in the province. OAA also supports provincial and municipal departments seeking advice and understanding of Indigenous context and voluntary engagement with local groups on important projects, initiatives and efforts. In addition, OAA coordinates and supports provincial engagement at public events and activities that promote and showcase Indigenous and Mi'kmaq people and organizations.

Continuing to build understanding of historical and contemporary Mi'kmaq and Indigenous context across Nova Scotia is a critical ongoing step as we continue to build stronger relationships and work towards reconciliation. OAA plays a critical role in sharing messages and knowledge to celebrate Nova Scotia's diverse cultural heritage and build welcoming and inclusive communities. Through collaboration with Mi'kmaw organizations, communities, and government departments and colleagues, OAA works to build capacity of organizations, celebrate culture and history, and extend the reach of education opportunities.

OAA, in collaboration with the Public Service Commission (PSC) offers education and awareness opportunities on Treaty education for public servants via the KAIROS Blanket Exercise. This experiential learning activity is an important introduction for Nova Scotia government employees from across government to build their understanding of Indigenous history, contemporary context and issues. For the year 2020-21, this activity was suspended due to COVID -19. During the pandemic, presenters from the Treaty Education Speakers Bureau switched to online presentations. Six presentations were delivered virtually to public servants across government departments and four were delivered to the general public. Work continued on the development of

a new offering for the learning calendar called Understanding the Treaty Relationship. The seven-and-a-half-hour workshop is being set up for online delivery and focuses on the four questions guiding Treaty Education: Who are the Mi'kmaq historically and today? What are the Treaties and why are they important? What happened to the Treaty relationship? What are we doing to reconcile our shared history to ensure justice and equity?

Mi'kmaq History Month aims to celebrate and build understanding of Mi'kmaw culture, history and language. OAA continues to support increased awareness of Mi'kmaq History Month through strategic planning and capacity development to bolster the success of October's series of events and activities. While in person events were limited due to public health protocols, a number of online events were shared across the province.

OAA co-coordinates the annual Treaty Day celebrations with the Mi'kmaq on October 1st, which commemorates the role of treaties in the relationship between Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the Crown. This year celebrations moved to a virtual platform that was hosted by the Halifax Central Library. The virtual event included speeches, ceremony, performances and videos focused on the shared history of our Treaty relationship. OAA coordinated the distribution of Treaty Day awards and celebrated recipients online. OAA also provides funding annually to Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey for scholarships awarded on Treaty Day.

OAA is working in partnership with Education and Early Childhood Development, Communities, Culture & Heritage, the Public Service Commission, Mi'kmaq partners, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK), and Millbrook First Nation on the Treaty Education initiative. This includes supporting the work of EECD to integrate Treaty Education into the Nova Scotia curriculum for grades P-12, as well as educating public servants and the general public. Treaty Education continues to oversee its Speakers Bureau and its social media presence on Facebook.

Aboriginal Affairs provides funding, coordination and staff resources to support the Treaty Education initiative, as well as specific events, projects and initiatives, such as Speakers Bureau gatherings, Indigenous People's Day and Mi'kmaq History Month. OAA, on behalf of Treaty Education Nova Scotia, signed an MOU with KAIROS Canada for a four-year term (beginning in 2017) and during the pandemic, started discussions regarding the extension of this agreement. Mi'kmaw and Indigenous public servants, educators and allies received training to facilitate the KAIROS Blanket Exercise throughout the public service.

While preparations for the North American Indigenous Games – NAIG 2020 – came to a halt due to cancellation because of the pandemic, the Treaty Education division continued working across departments and with Mi'kmaq partners to complete the creation of an updated culture awareness document for volunteers collaborated on the creation of videos and other collateral materials originally intended for the games.

Provincial government and Mi'kmaq officials will continue to work together to develop specific Treaty Education programs and services for the education system, the provincial civil service and the broader public.

## Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or
- directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2020-21
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A