

Today, on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we come together to honour the resilience and strength of Labrador Inuit residential school survivors, their families, and indeed all Labrador Inuit and other true Indigenous Peoples.

We acknowledge this day to ensure we never forget the injustices, pain, and suffering inflicted on our people. While residential schools offered educational opportunities, they also stripped us of our culture, language and identity – impacts that will be felt by generations to come.

The memories of these schools are a testament to the strength and resilience of survivors, whose stories remind us of the importance of achieving reconciliation. While no words will ever undo the harm caused by residential schools, it is important to recognize that forgiveness is a personal journey and not all survivors are ready to take that step. It is important that we respect these individual journeys and provide support when and wherever possible.

Acknowledging the past is the first step towards building a future based on mutual respect and understanding. We must continue to educate ourselves and others about the history and legacy of residential schools, and commit to actions that promote healing and reconciliation.

It is also essential to protect the integrity of our identity against false claims to Indigeneity that undermine the genuine experiences and struggles of Labrador Inuit and hinder the path to true reconciliation. We must remain vigilant and ensure that the recognition and rights of Indigenous peoples are based on truth and authenticity.

As we observe National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, let us stand in solidarity with the survivors and their families. Let us reaffirm our commitment to truth, healing and reconciliation, and in building a future where the rights, culture, and identity of Labrador Inuit are respected and celebrated.

