



# Progress Report

Update on Aboriginal Initiatives

Spring 2003

## National Aboriginal Day – June 21st

On June 21, join thousands of Canadians across the country as we celebrate the eighth annual National Aboriginal Day, a special occasion to pay tribute to the unique heritage, cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada.

Proclaimed by Canada's Governor General in 1996, National Aboriginal Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the unique achievements of Aboriginal people in fields as diverse as agriculture, and the environment, business development and the arts. A truly nation-wide celebration, National Aboriginal Day is part of the Celebrate Canada festivities, which also include Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, Multiculturalism Day and Canada Day.

For a list of events in your area, visit the National Aboriginal Day website, which can be accessed through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada at [www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca)

**National Aboriginal Day is for all Canadians – share in the celebration!**

## Moving forward on First Nations education

The final report of the National Working Group on Education was released recently. Robert D. Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said that the government is committed to ensuring that First Nations children have the same opportunities and quality of education that other Canadians enjoy.

The report is called *Our Children — Keepers of the Sacred Knowledge*. It makes recommendations to improve Aboriginal education in First Nations communities in a number of areas, including funding, language, culture and community involvement.

Further discussions and consultations are planned to determine the priorities of First Nations parents for their children's education.

For more information or to read the full report, visit Indian and Northern Affairs Canada online at [www.inac.gc.ca/ps/edu/finre/index\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/ps/edu/finre/index_e.html)

## Continued support for First Nations Forestry initiatives

Innovative forestry initiatives in First Nations communities will continue to receive support from the Government of Canada. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Robert D. Nault, and Minister of Natural Resources, Herb Dhaliwal, announced recently that the Government of Canada will renew the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) until March 31, 2008.

Established in 1996, the FNFP has supported more than 1,300 projects with \$34 million in federal monies and \$63 million in partnered funding, to create more than 74,000 weeks of work. Some 5,600 First Nations workers have gained valuable job experience through the program, and approximately 375 First Nations communities have participated.

The Government of Canada will contribute \$6.5 million per year for the next five years to support the FNFP. This is an increase of \$2 million per year from previous years.

For more information, go to [www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02268\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02268_e.html)

## New INAC toll-free public enquiries line

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has a new toll-free public enquiries line. Bilingual operators are now providing callers from all Canadian time zones with the latest information on our programs and services. The general enquiries implementation team is working closely with each sector and region to ensure the coordination of information services.

All sectors are providing up-to-date program information to the operators and are ensuring that program spokespersons are ready to assist the operators respond to more detailed information requests.

This new service assists us with our goal of providing information to the public that is quick, clear and accurate.

The department's new toll-free number is 1 800 567-9604, or 1 866 553-0554 for people with a hearing or speech disability.

For more information, visit INAC online at [www.inac.gc.ca/cnt/index\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/cnt/index_e.html)

## More information

Topics that may also be of interest:

**National survey of First Nations people on-reserve**  
[www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02240\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02240_e.html)

**Pipeline Readiness Office announced**  
[www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02250\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02250_e.html)

**National Business Summit held in Toronto**  
[www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02249\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02249_e.html)

**National Aboriginal Achievement Awards**  
[www.naaf.ca/naaa.html](http://www.naaf.ca/naaa.html)

**Building Aboriginal and Northern Economies**  
[www.inac.gc.ca/nr/nwltr/bae/index\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/nr/nwltr/bae/index_e.html)

**Guide for services available to First Nations**  
[www.inac.gc.ca/sg/index\\_e.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/sg/index_e.html)

## Feedback

Progress Report invites your comments and suggestions. Drop us a line at:

Progress Report  
Communications Branch  
Indian and Northern Affairs  
Canada

19th Floor, Room 1900  
10 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0H4

E-mail:  
[progressreport@inac.gc.ca](mailto:progressreport@inac.gc.ca)  
Fax: (819) 953-2305

Published under the authority  
of the Minister of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development  
Ottawa, 2003  
[www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca)

QS-6173-040-EE-A1  
ISSN 1705-4168

© Minister of Public Works and  
Government Services Canada

[www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca)

