

Announcement of the National Chair on Aboriginal Economic Development

Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell
Victoria
June 9, 2006

Check against delivery

I am honoured to be here this morning as we acknowledge Encana's generous contribution to this National Chair on Aboriginal Economic Development.

I would also like to thank Greg and Marilyn Sam who came today to share a blessing with us.

This is the first chair of its kind in Canada. It will serve as a national focus of expertise and for the advancement of Aboriginal business and economic development.

The National Chair on Aboriginal Economic Development will create a focus for collaboration on measures that will increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the regional, national and international economies. It will generate knowledge and best practices that will contribute to Aboriginal economic development.

The federal and provincial governments have contributed \$2 million and \$1 million respectively. And now with Encana's \$1 million contribution, this chair is well-funded to do its important work.

Premier Gordon Campbell is committed to working with Aboriginal people and assisting in the advancement of new economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities is critical to achieving that goal.

We believe that everyone in this province should have the tools to participate in the economic and social fabric of our society. Innovative strategies are required to reverse the trends that have left too many aboriginal people behind in education, health, and economic opportunity.

We believe strongly that this chair's work will make a significant and positive difference to Aboriginal people living and working in British Columbia.

We can harness our shared commitment to overcoming community challenges and dismantle the barriers that hinder Aboriginal people from sharing in the bounty that this great province has to offer.

By working together – governments, Aboriginal peoples, private sponsors, businesses and post-secondary institutions – we can create an environment that nurtures and supports Aboriginal communities and ultimately benefits all British Columbians.

Thank you.