



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Aboriginal Art and Culture Celebration Society

PROVINCE FUNDS NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

VANCOUVER – The Province has contributed \$200,000 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of National Aboriginal Day, June 21, on the grounds of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Tom Christensen said today.

“National Aboriginal Day is a fitting time to recognize the vibrant Aboriginal cultures of British Columbia,” Christensen said. “We’re proud to join with the First Nations Leadership Council in giving British Columbians the opportunity to experience first-hand the rich cultural diversity of Aboriginal people in B.C.”

As part of the funding for the events, the Province and the First Nations Leadership Council partnered with the Aboriginal Art and Culture Celebration Society (AACCS), a non-profit organization promoting Aboriginal culture and identity. AACCS is organizing an Aboriginal Celebration from June 21 to 25 to mark National Aboriginal Day. Activities include cultural displays, food and craft fairs, and traditional presentations by First Nations from across British Columbia. Many events will be held in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery and are open to the public free of charge.

“Our National Aboriginal Day celebrations are the largest in Canada,” said Germaine Langan, AACCS event manager and founder. “We’ve been organizing the celebrations since 1998, and we’re really thrilled at how these celebrations have grown.”

“National Aboriginal Day provides an important opportunity for British Columbians to learn more about the significant contributions Aboriginal people have made to B.C. and Canada,” said Dave Porter, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive. “We commend the provincial government for providing the financial resources for this important event, which gives the public the chance to join with us in celebrating the diverse cultures and heritage of Aboriginal people in British Columbia.”

National Aboriginal Day events on June 21 include a celebration of the repatriation of an historic totem pole returned to the Haisla Nation after decades in a Swedish museum, ceremonies and performances by many British Columbia First Nations and Aboriginal groups. A full schedule of events for June 21 to 25 can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/arr and www.aboriginalday-van.com.

The Province is building a New Relationship with First Nations founded on the principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights. The goal is to ensure Aboriginal people share in the economic and social development of B.C., in line with government’s five great goals for a golden decade.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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