

City of Welland's statement on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. On this day, we honour Indigenous survivors, families, and communities. But we must remember our commitment to truth and reconciliation cannot be acknowledged or practiced on one day alone. Two things must happen for our commitment to being considered sincere.

One: we must, without bias or pretense, accept the truths, as hard as they may be, of the horrific experiences of our Indigenous people and vow to understand them better. We cannot begin to reconcile until we have accepted and understood these truths.

Two: we must find ways to engage and protect our Indigenous community in our daily lives, personally and professionally. Pledging unity on one day of the year is not only not enough but also disingenuous. When you hear someone denigrate the Indigenous culture, are you silent, or do you speak up? Let's all speak up, even if it's the hard thing to do.

The City of Welland is proud to acknowledge and support the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and provide staff with resources to learn more about Indigenous history and culture. Staff are encouraged to participate in Orange Shirt Day, whereby donations will support Indigenous organizations. This year, the City's podcast, What's Up, Welland? hosted two members of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre to help share the stories and culture of the Indigenous community. I strongly recommend you take the time to listen to this particular [episode](#).

In the coming months, the City will incorporate Indigenous art into one of its early 2023 projects (our illustrated children's book) and is in early discussions about hosting walking tours and turning Welland orange at this time next year. We have a long way to go, but we remain committed to travelling the road.

But this is just the beginning of our journey to understand and reconcile. We cannot stop here. We must not stop here. Each day is an opportunity, and as we move past the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we must build towards the next.

I invite Indigenous groups and organizations to connect with staff to assist the City in further embracing and incorporating Indigenous culture into the community.

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