



REGROUPEMENT
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



Québec Ombudsman Report: RCAAQ Commends the Significant Progress Made

Wendake, October 4, 2023 – The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) commends the release of the Québec Ombudsman's first follow-up report on the Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress (Viens Commission). The RCAAQ contributed to this report through the Indigenous Advisory Circle and the Québec Ombudsman's work on the calls to action. Although there is still work to be done, the report shows that tangible progress has been made in all the targeted public services and that there is a clear desire for change in many fields in response to the calls for action.

Among other things, the Québec Ombudsman noted progress in justice, education and health and social services. The measures announced by the Government of Québec have activated support for a range of projects and programs, and made it possible to collaborate with the RCAAQ. For example:

- In the area of justice, financial support has enabled Native Friendship Centres to play an active role in programs that offer alternatives to litigation and to help Indigenous people gain access to quality services that suit their needs and cultures.
- In education, funding for construction by the RCAAQ's real estate company of three community living environments in Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Québec City affirms the government's support for school perseverance among Indigenous post-secondary students. These living environments address the barriers faced by Indigenous students head on by providing them with affordable, accessible and safe housing.
- In healthcare, priority initiatives taking a cultural safety approach have been developed or improved to complement the services of the health and social services network. To this end, services at existing Indigenous health clinics have been expanded and others have been added to provide adequate support to urban Indigenous populations. These clinics offer adapted services that take into account Indigenous knowledge and expertise.

The Québec Ombudsman's report also shows that much work remains to be done, particularly in the areas of youth protection and housing. To reduce the differences between Québec's Indigenous citizens and the population as a whole and to enable the government to fully assume its duty toward Indigenous people, responsibility for the services offered must truly be shared. Further, all forms of discrimination against Indigenous people in Québec must be prohibited.



Quote:

“The public services provided to Indigenous people should be based on a global view of significant and tangible improvements in the living conditions and well-being of the First Nations and Inuit, by implementing cross-cutting strategies. The latter must trigger systemic changes within the public apparatus to reduce the socio-economic gaps between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous populations in Quebec. The Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement has been developing its services with this objective for over 50 years.”

—Tanya Sirois, Executive Director, Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

About the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

The RCAAQ is a network of 11 Friendship Centres and 3 service points that offer Indigenous people culturally relevant and safe services that contribute to the harmony and reconciliation between Peoples in Quebec cities. The Native Friendship Centres are the largest urban service infrastructure for Indigenous people, offering a range of integrated services in a variety of sectors, including health, social services, social inclusion, education, employability, early childhood and youth. The Société immobilière du Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (SIRCAAQ) was founded in 2019 to collectively develop and apply innovative and sustainable real estate infrastructure solutions that contribute to the wellness of Indigenous people.

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