

Education of Local Governments Critical to Reconciliation Work

In October, the Provincial Government introduced legislation to implement the [2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UN Declaration\)](#). This is an important step towards improving relationships with First Nations and one which I support without reservation. It is about reconciliation and recognition and it is about building relationships.

The Town of Gibsons is within the Squamish Nation Traditional Territory and more specifically on an area called Checkwelp. The Squamish Nation lands located between Gibsons and Granthams (West Howe Sound) is Checkwelp Reserve 26. While we routinely acknowledge this relationship at the start of meetings and at events in the community, I have learned that most people are unfamiliar with our local history and more importantly with the history of the Squamish Nation in this area.

The Town's [2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#) recognizes that Gibsons shares many common concerns with neighbouring communities and identifies the need to reach out and to collaborate or partner with the Squamish Nation and with the Sechelt Nation. This is particularly important to planning for and adoption of a regional growth strategy.

I believe that as a first step, we must implement those provisions of the [2015 Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action](#) that relate to local governments beginning with [Number 57: Professional Development and Training for Public Servants](#):

'We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.'

We need to do this now so that we can accomplish other goals for our communities and build a common future that recognizes the importance of culture, identity, inclusion and community beyond our own limited interests. I call upon all governments and School District 46 to join in this initiative and to make it a priority and I am prepared to work with our local communities, First Nations and the provincial government to make this happen.

Please contact me at mayor@gibsons.ca if you'd like to contribute toward, or learn more about, advancing this initiative.

