



NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

# Reconciliation Policy

MAY 2026



## Introduction

The *Reconciliation Policy* is designed to provide a framework to support a body of work that has been underway since the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) inception in 2002. The NWMO *Reconciliation Policy* replaces and builds on the *NWMO Aboriginal Policy*.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report in December 2015, which included [94 Calls to Action](#). Call to Action 92 calls upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a Reconciliation framework, and to apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous Peoples and their lands and resources.

The Council of Elders and Youth has made significant contributions to the development of NWMO policies. The council recognizes that the NWMO has taken a leadership role in the private sector to establish progressive policies of importance to First Nations and Métis Peoples. The NWMO's commitment to Reconciliation presents the opportunity to harmonize the key elements of many of our policies into a holistic policy framework as guided by the Council of Elders and Youth. The NWMO also acknowledges that making active, meaningful contributions to Reconciliation is vital to our success in building and maintaining respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

On July 18, 2018, the NWMO made a commitment to contribute towards Reconciliation by acknowledging historical wrongs in Canada's past and the need to create a better future by addressing the challenges of today.

The NWMO's Reconciliation Statement reads as follows:

*In the context of Reconciliation, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) recognizes historical wrongs in Canada's past and the need to create a better future by addressing the challenges of today. The NWMO Council of Elders and Youth speaks of this journey as a new era for humanity — a time of Reconciliation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples.*

*The NWMO is committed to contribute to Reconciliation in all our work by co-creating a shared future built on rights, equity and well-being. In addition, the NWMO will establish a Reconciliation Policy with an implementation strategy that will be measured annually and publicly reported to contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.*

## Truth (background)

The first step in working towards Reconciliation is understanding the truth and history of First Nations and Métis Peoples and their relationship with Canada.

The [report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) reads:

*Canada's residential school system for Aboriginal children was an education system in name only for much of its existence. These residential schools were created for the purpose of separating Aboriginal children from their families, in order to minimize and weaken family ties and cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into a new culture—the culture of the legally dominant Euro-Christian Canadian society, led by Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. The schools were in existence for well over 100 years, and many successive generations of children from the same communities and families endured the experience of them. That experience was hidden for most of Canada's history, until Survivors of the system were finally able to find the strength, courage, and support to bring their experiences to light in several thousand court cases that ultimately led to the largest class-action lawsuit in Canada's history.*

Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other initiatives, residential schools are becoming a more widely known fact by many Canadians. The realities of those tragedies and traumas continue to affect generations. Now that this truth is more widely known, it is important that all Canadians find a way to reconcile with the truth, never forget the past and create a better future with relationships based on respect.

We must also continue to evolve in our commitments to Reconciliation as the effects of intergenerational trauma and ongoing racism continue to impact Indigenous communities and Peoples.

## Principles

The NWMO will be guided by the following principles in all our work:

- » The NWMO recognizes, honours and supports the belief that Indigenous Peoples have a special relationship with the natural environment, have unique stewardship responsibilities that are part of this relationship, and are guided by the Seven Teachings (love, trust, sharing, honesty, humility, respect and wisdom) whose principles are universal, including the sacred laws and codes of Indigenous Peoples.
- » The NWMO recognizes that the protection of Mother Earth for future generations is in itself a foundational commitment to and responsibility of all people.
- » The NWMO supports the Council of Elders and Youth [Declaration of the Keepers of the Land](#) and the [Indigenous Knowledge Policy](#).
- » The NWMO acknowledges that Indigenous Peoples are holders of Indigenous Knowledge and recognizes that Indigenous Knowledge is essential and integral to decision-making processes.

- » The NWMO will foster respectful relationships among community partners and recognizes that it takes time to develop knowledge, experience deep understandings, and establish trust and respect.
- » The NWMO recognizes that the safety and security of future generations is integral to the Indigenous worldview, is fundamental to decision-making processes of Indigenous Peoples, and is the responsibility of all people to future generations.
- » The NWMO acknowledges that good decision-making among communities regarding the NWMO's work must be built on a foundation of knowledge to ensure that informed choices can be made by communities in the spirit of Reconciliation and partnership together with the NWMO.
- » The NWMO understands that Indigenous Knowledge, together with western science, is part of good decision-making when built on a foundation of trust and sharing of information in a respectful manner.
- » The NWMO acknowledges that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience disproportionately high levels of violence because of ongoing colonialism, systemic racism, gender discrimination, and social and economic inequities. We recognize that our activities, decisions and presence, if not carefully planned and monitored, can contribute to or exacerbate these risks.
- » The NWMO is committed to advancing economic Reconciliation by ensuring that Indigenous nations, communities and businesses have meaningful, equitable and sustained opportunities to benefit from and participate in economic activities connected to our work through the development of an evolving economic Reconciliation strategy.

## Policy

The NWMO commits that Indigenous Knowledge will inform all our work and activities.

The NWMO acknowledges, respects and honours that First Nations and Métis Peoples of Canada have unique status and rights as recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the [Constitution Act \(1982\)](#). The NWMO is committed to respecting the Aboriginal rights and treaties of First Nations and Métis Peoples. The NWMO also recognizes that there may be unresolved claims between First Nations and Métis communities and the Crown to be considered in relation to any potential sites.

The NWMO will build relationships with First Nations and Métis communities, municipalities, groups and peoples on a foundation of respect for languages and customs, cultural protocols, and political, social, economic and cultural institutions.

The NWMO commits to meaningful engagement, including consultation as required, building respectful relationships, and seeking the free, prior and informed consent of impacted Indigenous Peoples before proceeding with the development of a deep geological repository.

The NWMO commits to providing education for management and staff on the history of Indigenous 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 Crown-Indigenous relations, which will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism as stated in Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 92.

The NWMO will take proactive, culturally informed and trauma-aware actions to prevent and mitigate risks of violence associated with our work. This commitment aligns with the [Calls for Justice](#) of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and with our responsibility to uphold Indigenous rights, safety and dignity as stated in Call for Justice 13.1-13.5.

The NWMO commits to provide impacted First Nations and Métis Peoples with equitable access to jobs, business opportunities, and training and education opportunities in our work, and to ensure their communities gain long-term, sustainable benefits from the development of a deep geological repository.

The NWMO commits to increasing Indigenous employment opportunities and creating inclusive, culturally safe workplaces where Indigenous employees are supported to succeed, grow and lead.

The NWMO will work with impacted Indigenous communities in implementing our mandate under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* (NFWA), as well as in the work we are doing going forward as we seek to find safe, long-term storage for all Canada's used nuclear fuel. The selection of any potential site(s) must be informed by the best available knowledge, including science, social science, Indigenous Knowledge and ethics.

The NWMO will work with the Crown regarding the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate as guided by decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada in fulfilling our obligations under the NFWA. All our work with respect to the duty to consult will be guided by Reconciliation.

The NWMO will work with First Nations and Métis communities and municipalities that wish to share their knowledge and advice in all phases of work as we seek to find safe, long-term storage for all Canada's used nuclear fuel. This includes any future site selection process, as well as the design, construction, operation and monitoring of the deep geological repository.

The NWMO commits to respecting and following local First Nation and Métis protocols related to burial sites found on work sites.

The NWMO will develop an annual Reconciliation implementation plan that will be measured and publicly reported.

The NWMO will communicate clearly with potential new employees about who we are as an organization with regard to our commitment to aligning with Indigenous Knowledge, to building partnerships with Indigenous communities and to our commitment to Reconciliation.

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