

FEDERAL BUDGET

CUPE

2010

Aboriginal Peoples

What's in the Budget?

This budget includes a total of \$908 million to assist Aboriginal Peoples:

- \$30 million to support K-12 education for students to receive comparable education whether the classroom is located on or off reserve.
- \$330 million funding extension for safe drinking water on reserves.
- \$10 million over two years to address violence against women and the disturbingly high number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. This funding is acceptable, but does not deal with the approximately 500 Aboriginal women have gone missing in the last two decades.
- \$53 million to further progress on developing partnerships with First Nation organizations, provincial and territorial governments on the delivery of child and family services.
- \$199 million to implement Indian Residential Schools Settlement was anticipated, as about 150,000 Aboriginal Peoples were forced to attend government schools over the last century.

- \$285 million to improve Aboriginal health outcomes by renewing investments in the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative, Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, maternal and child health programs, Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative; and the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund.

What does it mean for Aboriginal Peoples?

The graduation and employment rates for Aboriginal Peoples are the lowest in the country. Investing \$2 billion in education, educational facilities, language instruction and skills development was needed in this area alone. Not lifting the 2% funding cap on First Nation core services in place since 1996, is discriminatory. The cap means increased tuition levels, equates to fewer students each year. In the first half of this decade, more than 10,000 students who might have become entrepreneurs, health-care providers or skilled laborers, have been denied.

Aboriginal Peoples endure the worst water conditions in Canada. The federal government funds require the communities to put up 20% of the project funding for water and wastewater projects, which is an almost impossible amount for any community. It also signals that the federal government will be pushing Aboriginal communities into P3s to finance their water infrastructure.

The supply of affordable housing has not kept pace with the growing Aboriginal Peoples demographics. Aboriginal housing falls significantly short of the \$2.5 billion target set out by housing experts and advocates. The federal budget once again falls significantly short in addressing the social and on-reserve Aboriginal housing needs.

What would be better choices?

This year's federal budget could have laid out a plan that would meet the needs of Aboriginal Peoples – fully funded water developments, green ventures and housing projects that would create jobs and enhance Aboriginal public services to lay the foundations for a stronger economy and a more equal society.

The budget could have demonstrated that there is a better way to reach fiscal balance through smart investments instead of the historic “budget band aid” approach to Aboriginal Peoples. The federal government had the ability to strengthen relationships with National Aboriginal Leaders by basing the budget on enhanced collaboration, effective working partnerships and mutual respect. In that spirit, the Federal Government should have addressed the “Kelowna Accord budget” (*this is the same government that cut the Kelowna Accord that was previously committed to*) to assist in closing the gap in the quality of life that now exists between Aboriginal Peoples and other Canadians. The ultimate goal of this

effort was to address the serious conditions that contribute to poverty among Aboriginal Peoples and to ensure that they can more fully benefit from and contribute to Canada's prosperity. In adopting the “Kelowna Accord budget,” all parties were committed to move forward in ways that build on the principles enshrined in the Constitution including the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.

The discriminatory levels of funding for First Nations child protection agencies must be ended. The Commitment to the rights of Indigenous peoples has been weakened by the failure to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That position must be reversed.

Aboriginal Peoples continue to face high infant mortality rates and low life expectancy. Because of unique genetic, social and lifestyle circumstances, they are three to five times more likely than the general population to be diagnosed with diabetes. Suicide rates between three and 11 times higher than the national average, means there is a suicide epidemic occurring among the aboriginal youth population in Canada. In fact, suicide is now the number-one cause of death in this population, which also happens to be the fastest-growing population in Canada. A strategic health plan and annual allotments of funding are needed rather than “piecemeal” announcements, which don't allow for better long term planning.

For more information, visit <http://cupe.ca/budget>