
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

Helping First Nations bring ancestors, belongings home

VICTORIA – First Nations wanting their ancestral remains and cultural objects returned will soon have access to financial support through the BC Museums Association.

“The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is clear: Indigenous peoples have a right to the repatriation of cultural objects and remains of their ancestors,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. “We’re supporting this important work with First Nations because we know that returning ancestral remains and cultural belongings is essential for true and lasting reconciliation.”

The B.C. government is providing \$500,000 to the BC Museums Association to provide a range of grants to support communities at different stages of the repatriation process. First Nations communities and organizations will be eligible for grants to support repatriation planning, building capacity to take on repatriation projects and encouraging collaboration with cultural organizations.

These grants follow the Province’s \$2-million investment over three years to the Royal BC Museum for repatriation activities. The activities included a provincewide repatriation symposium, a granting program, digital repatriation programs, community work and the creation of Canada’s first repatriation handbook for Indigenous peoples by Indigenous peoples.

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a shared priority of government and the BC Green Party caucus and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quotes:

Jodi Simkin, president, BC Museums Association (BCMA) –

“First Nations throughout British Columbia are eager to have their ancestors and related cultural patrimony repatriated. This funding demonstrates a commitment to helping achieve this important and essential step in the reconciliation process and the BCMA is proud to support this work.”

Dan Smith, chair, BCMA Indigenous Advisory Committee, and member, Wei Wai Kum First Nation in Campbell River –

“This funding allows museums, archives and Indigenous peoples new opportunities to work together towards decolonization and realizing the goals set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. True, meaningful and lasting reconciliation must include the return of Indigenous culture back to Indigenous communities.”

Jack Lohman, CEO, Royal BC Museum –

“The Royal BC Museum's work in repatriation has built credibility with Indigenous communities by expanding our role. I am delighted we can continue to act as a catalyst for the return of ancestors, treasures and belongings and help address the legacy of unresolved grief in Indigenous communities across B.C.”

Learn More:

Applications will open on Sept. 8, 2020: <http://museumsassn.bc.ca/repatriation-grants/>

To read the Rod Naknakim Declaration: <http://museumsassn.bc.ca/about-us/council-commitees/indigenous-advisory-council/>

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