



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Light Calls on Premier Furey for a Coordinated Response to Truth and Reconciliation

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

St. John's, NL – Tomorrow will mark the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Also known as [Orange Shirt Day](#), September 30 is a day to honour the survivors of Canada's residential school system and to remember those who never returned home to their families. It is also a time for all Canadians to pause and reflect on this country's ongoing legacy of colonialism and to take stock of the work that remains to be done to implement the [Calls to Action](#) and the [Calls for Justice](#).

In the interests of the health and wellbeing of Elders, survivors, and community members amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, First Light will not be holding any public events this year. Instead, the community tent will be set up, with drop-in support services and takeaway lunch available to all members of the urban Indigenous community. Journalists covering the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation are invited to attend a media availability that will be held between 1pm and 2pm at the First Light Centre for Performance and Creativity located at 42 Bannerman Street.

First Light recognizes that many individuals, organizations, and governments have chosen to observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as an official holiday. We welcome these gestures and hope they will spark conversations about colonialism, systemic racism, and the ways that we can and should work together to build a more inclusive Canada. At the same time, we encourage everyone to be mindful that these conversations should serve a larger purpose: reflection must be followed by understanding, and understanding must be followed by action.

It has now been six years since the release of the Calls to Action and two years since the release of the Calls for Justice. And yet still it remains unclear how or even whether these calls will be

implemented in Newfoundland and Labrador. To mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, First Light is calling on Premier Andrew Furey to immediately enact a formal and coordinated response to implement all of the Calls to Action and the Calls for Justice that fall within the province's jurisdiction. Such a response must be led in full and equal partnership with all Indigenous organizations and governments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and it must include the full participation of urban Indigenous people as well. Targets must be set and progress toward achieving them reported annually and publicly. Most importantly, such a response must include an appropriate allocation of resources, support, and expertise.

As the first of many National Days for Truth and Reconciliation yet to come, September 30, 2021, is an opportunity for Indigenous people and our allies to come together not just to heal, but to imagine a better future for this country – one where September 30 will have become a day when all Canadians acknowledge our country's colonial origins, and we celebrate the hard-earned achievement of our reconciliation, one to another, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who share this land together.

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First Light is a registered non-profit that has been serving both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in St. John's since 1983. The organization provides programs and services rooted in the revitalization, strengthening, and celebration of Indigenous cultures and languages in the spirit of trust, respect, and friendship.