



Joint Declaration on Reconciliation

March 11, 2016, Winnipeg, MB/Treaty One Territory – The three Canadian members of the [Global Alliance for Banking on Values](#) (Saskatchewan’s Affinity Credit Union, Manitoba’s Assiniboine Credit Union, and BC’s Vancity Savings Credit Union) welcome the opportunity to engage fully and meaningfully in reconciliation, and have made this commitment together at a National Reconciliation Gathering in Winnipeg on March 11.

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada](#) spent six years hearing from thousands of Canadians living with the legacy of being taken from their families and placed in residential schools. It is important that all Canadians understand and acknowledge the multi-generational harm that has been inflicted, and commit to establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

The TRC articulated a path forward with 94 specific [Calls to Action](#), including recommendations focused on the role of the private sector, under the heading “Business and Reconciliation.”

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, the visionary behind the creation of Reconciliation Canada, noted “Each person has an important role to play in reconciliation. Reconciliation begins with oneself and then extends into our families, relationships, workplaces and eventually into our communities. It is so wonderful to see the courage of organizations like these credit unions being leaders in demonstrating how the business community in Canada can also be part of this healing journey.”

The TRC specifically calls on the corporate community in Canada to embrace, as a reconciliation framework, the principles, spirit, and intent of the [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), as well as to:

- i. *Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.*
- ii. *Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.*
- iii. *Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the UN 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.*

As values-based financial cooperatives, and consistent with our responsibilities to our members and our communities, Affinity, Assiniboine and Vancity embrace the principles of the reconciliation framework, and recommit to the ongoing work of embedding the spirit and substance of meaningful reconciliation in our policies and operations, as fundamental to the decisions we make in pursuit of healthy, vibrant communities characterized by inclusion, justice and sustainability.

We recognize that Reconciliation is a journey, undertaken in concert with partners. We will listen and learn, with courage and determination. We are honoured to recommit ourselves to a journey so vital to the future of our country, and we invite all individuals, organizations and governments to join in this journey of healing and reconciliation.

Quotes

"I feel so much pride to be a part of Affinity Credit Union as we answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call on the business community to contribute to the reconciliation process in Canada. I consider myself lucky to be part of a financial institution like Affinity that shares many of the values I cherish as a First Nations person. The road to reconciliation will be long for all Canadians, but the participation of organizations like Affinity is encouraging. As Canadians, each of us has a great deal in common, and through the reconciliation process, I hope we will be able to use that common ground to build a brighter future for everyone."

– *Paul Ledoux, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation representative on Affinity's District 9 Council*

The courage and honesty of the thousands of individuals who shared their personal stories for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are humbling and inspiring, and compel every Canadian to join the journey of reconciliation. At Assiniboine Credit Union, we welcome the opportunity to engage in reconciliation, acknowledging that there is a particular role for businesses in this process. With courage and determination, we will listen and learn, and continue the important work of building respectful relationships toward more inclusive, just, and prosperous communities.

- *Vera Goussaert, Chair, Board of Directors, Assiniboine Credit Union*

"Today's joint declaration is a vital step in a journey toward healing and progress in forging stronger relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. With our Global Alliance for Banking on Values partners, we are embracing the TRC's reconciliation framework and encouraging all values-based and cooperative businesses to join us in responding to their Call to Action."

- *Jan O'Brien, Chair, Board of Directors, Vancity*

About Affinity Credit Union

Affinity Credit Union is the 8th largest credit union in Canada with \$5.7 billion in managed assets and with the largest credit union branch network in Saskatchewan. It offers access to a complete range of accounts and services and is a leader in delivering quality investment and lending services to Saskatchewan. Affinity Credit Union has a workforce of 900 people and is 100% owned by more than 135,000 members, all of whom have a voice in the way the credit union does business. For more information, go to: www.affinitycu.ca.

About Assiniboine Credit Union

Assiniboine Credit Union is a financial cooperative in Manitoba with branches in Winnipeg, Thompson and Gillam with over 450 employees serving 112,000 members in those communities. A proud member of the Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV), Assiniboine Credit Union is dedicated to doing business with positive impact on the triple bottom line of people, planet and prosperity. Doing more for you. Doing more for your community. Doing more for your financial well-being. To learn more, visit www.assiniboine.mb.ca

About Vancity

Vancity is a values-based financial co-operative serving the needs of its more than 519,000 member-owners and their communities in the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw territories, with 59 branches in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Victoria, Squamish and Alert Bay. As Canada's largest community credit union, Vancity uses its \$19.8 billion in assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while at the same time helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. To learn more, visit www.vancity.com

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