



BC RECONCILIATION AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Margaret Pfoh, CEO, Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA)

“On behalf of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association, well-known as AHMA, I am deeply honoured to accept the British Columbia Reconciliation Award. I want to begin by acknowledging the traditional and unceded territories on which we are gathered today, and by recognizing the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous leaders whose wisdom has guided our work for decades.

Reconciliation is not a concept to be admired—it is a responsibility to be carried. And tonight, this award is not just a recognition of AHMA. It is a recognition of what is possible when Indigenous leadership is trusted, resourced, and empowered to lead solutions.

At AHMA, our values are rooted in accountability, partnership, respect, advocacy, and impact. We are responsive to community needs, and we build capacity for Indigenous wellness. Our approach is holistic, innovative, and culturally grounded. Because that’s what works. Culture saves lives, and our members support brighter futures.

AHMA members provide 95% of the urban Indigenous housing and services located off reserve in BC. They are experts at what they do. They are a lifeline for those who might otherwise be unhoused. They support Elders, Youth, Women experiencing violence, single parents, and those with complex healthcare requirements. They are an essential service for municipalities struggling to meet growing housing need, and poverty cycles that disproportionately impact Indigenous people.



Today, AHMA member societies collectively manage close to one billion dollars in housing assets for over 10,000 families, and since inception, have contributed over two billion dollars in municipal, provincial, and federal taxes across 53 urban, rural, and northern communities in BC. These are not abstract numbers. They represent stable homes, local jobs, economic activity, and healthier communities—every single day.

They also represent trust—earned over time, through results. Housing is often discussed as a social issue. At AHMA, we know it is also an economic strategy, a workforce strategy, a public wellness strategy, and a reconciliation strategy. In fact, independent analysis shows that every dollar invested in Indigenous housing through AHMA delivers a 700% social return on investment.

Few public investments in this country can demonstrate that level of impact. And yet, the case for investing in Indigenous housing has never been more urgent.

Indigenous peoples are the fastest-growing population in Canada, at a time when the national birth rate is declining sharply and immigration levels are flattening. This reality carries an unavoidable conclusion: if Canada wants a healthy, skilled workforce over the next two decades, we must invest in Indigenous people—now. That investment starts with housing.

Without safe, affordable, and culturally-grounded housing, young people cannot complete their education. Parents cannot fully participate in the labour force. Communities cannot stabilize or grow. Housing is not adjacent to these outcomes—it is the foundation beneath them.

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AHMA DELIVERS
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RETURN ON
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Recent global and national events have reinforced this truth in new ways. The lessons emerging from ongoing trade tensions and economic uncertainty are clear: Canada cannot rely solely on external markets or global supply chains for its future strength. We must find resilience from within.

And one of the greatest untapped strengths in this country is the potential of Indigenous leadership and brilliance. Unlocking that potential requires more than words. It requires equity, justice, infrastructure, and political will. It requires systems that work, and government partners who understand how to deliver at the speed, scope, and scale required to address the housing crisis. That is where AHMA comes in. For over three decades, AHMA has served as the backbone of urban Indigenous housing in British Columbia—supporting Indigenous housing providers with governance, asset management, financing, data, and policy alignment. We work shoulder-to-shoulder with municipalities, the Province of BC, and the Government of Canada to deliver outcomes that align directly with housing needs and goals.

AHMA and our members have laboured tirelessly to increase supply, protect long-term affordability, uphold Indigenous self-determination, and contribute to community stability. Our work is not finished – it continues. We are leading with forward-looking strategies that respond to current realities. Our Indigenous Youth Housing Strategy recognizes that young people aging out of care or transitioning to independence require more than a couch, a tent, or a precarious unit - they need a home with stability, love, trauma-responsive wraparound supports, and pathways to education and employment. Our Gender-Based Violence Indigenous Housing Strategy responds to one of the most urgent crises facing Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Safe housing saves lives - full stop. Women should not need to choose between violence and homelessness. These strategies are not pilot projects. They are scalable, evidence-based solutions ready to be expanded across jurisdictions. And this is why AHMA must be seen as the go-to partner for urban Indigenous housing municipally, provincially, and nationally. We bring proven governance models. We bring financial sophistication. We bring community trust. We bring 30 years of expertise. And we bring results.



2025 BC RECONCILIATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

Aboriginal Housing Management Association

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association leads Indigenous housing justice in BC, providing homes to thousands and reshaping policy through powerful, Indigenous-led solutions.



British Columbia
Reconciliation Award



Reconciliation is about truth-telling, it is also about action, and it is especially the work of those who have something to reconcile for. AHMA can help. As governments at all levels work to meet ambitious housing targets, address labour shortages, and strengthen economic resilience, Indigenous housing must be central to planning for stability and equity. And Indigenous organizations must be recognized not as stakeholders, but as partners.

This award tells us that the Province of BC understands that truth. It tells us that reconciliation is being measured not only by intention, but by outcomes. So tonight, we accept this honour with gratitude—and with resolve. Resolve to keep building. Resolve to keep pushing for systems that work better. Resolve to ensure that Indigenous people in urban communities across Canada have access to housing that is safe, affordable, and rooted in dignity. Because when Indigenous people thrive, our society grows stronger from within. Thank you for this recognition. Thank you for your partnership. And thank you for walking this path of reconciliation with us, together.”

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