



Reclaiming our Nations  
Our Agenda. Our Solutions.

# 2015-2016 Annual Report

Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

## Vision

We, the original peoples of Turtle Island, knowing that the Creator placed us here as sovereign nations, will continue to exercise our full jurisdiction, in accordance to our own traditional laws and practices with respect to the land, water, air, fire and peoples.

## Mission

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will enhance and protect the inherent rights, languages, cultures, lands and laws of its Member Nations.

*Cover art: AIAI Annual General Assembly, 2015, Batchewana First Nation*



## Messages from the Political Executive

Grand Chief Gord Peters

Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish

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## Grand Chief Gord Peters

There are many successes to be celebrated from the past year outlined in this report. We must continue to maintain our momentum and stay our course moving into the coming year. This year was largely about building relationships and laying the foundation for moving our priorities forward. Most significantly, we saw the growth of our relationship with the province of Ontario. We signed a historic political accord with the Premier, and as part of that agreement have committed to a bi-lateral relationship and outlined shared priorities to address together. We are beginning to move forward on jurisdiction over child welfare, critical environment priorities, and a process for dispute resolution that takes our relationship with the province out of the court system.

As one notable highlight from this year, we were able to successfully negotiate with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services to shift their understanding of our jurisdiction over child welfare as not within the framework of delegated authority, but embedded in our inherent responsibility for our children. I look forward to continuing this work and creating better solutions for our Nations.



## Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish

This has been a year marked by change and progress – with much to celebrate. I'd specifically like to commend our staff and community members for the work that went into restructuring our Health and Social Advisory Board this year. This change means that AIAI can now better advocate on health and social issues that impact our Member Nations.

This has also been a remarkable year for progress within the Women's Caucus at the Chiefs of Ontario. We launched the "Who is She?" Campaign – a fundraiser to support our own truth finding process for our Missing and Murdered women and girls, we participated in pre-inquiry conversations as Canada's Federal Government moves forward with a long-awaited inquiry, and we supported local initiatives to empower women and girls in our Nations.

This report truly serves as an opportunity to step back and take stock of just how much we have achieved in the past year. Thank you to AIAI's Chiefs Council, staff, and all of our partners for all your hard work and dedication.



## Indigenous Reclamation

### Indigenous reclamation is foundational to the work of our communities.

AIAI has been working over the past year to support our Member Nations to better understand how reclamation strategies can enable their work. AIAI has worked to embed this foundational approach across our lobbying efforts and intergovernmental relations.

In response to the resolution passed at last year's Annual General Assembly, AIAI staff and leadership have visited four of our Member Nations over the

past year to support better education of Indigenous reclamation and to engage in a community-based dialogue to support Nation building efforts.

Internally, AIAI has begun the work to align our internal processes to better facilitate this work. Most notably, the restructuring of our Health and Social Advisory Board and Education Committee are examples of how our structure has shifted to support this work.

Lastly, this focus has had the greatest impact within our lobbying strategies across all of our sectors. Indigenous reclamation has been a critical focus in negotiating the Political Accord with the Province of Ontario, established a bi-lateral table, and a joint work plan to address key priorities for our Member Nations.

## Political Accord



In August of 2015, the Political Confederacy signed a historic Political Accord with the Province of Ontario and Premier Kathleen Wynne. The Accord affirms Ontario's commitment to working within a government-to-government relationship, and outlines how we will work together to identify and address joint priorities.

While this work was coordinated through the Political Confederacy and the Chiefs of Ontario, the political task force that led the negotiations and strategy to achieve the signing of the Accord included AIAI's Grand Chief Peters as well as Grand Chief Mike Mitchell, Ogichidaa Warren White, and Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee.

- Promotes a bi-lateral relationship between First Nations and Ontario by strengthening and supporting existing processes
- Establishes a process to identify joint priorities
- Establishes mechanisms such as an alternative dispute resolution process to resolve high-level areas of jurisdiction
- Upholds First Nations' inherent right to self-government
- Implements and explores First Nations jurisdiction through a piloted initiative

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"We are in the midst of a changing social and political environment. This Accord captures this social shift and is a tremendous step forward in building a new political relationship between First Nations and the Government of Ontario."

- Grand Chief Gord Peters

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## Bi-Lateral Relationship

Based on the commitment to regional diversity outlined in the Political Accord, AIAI proceeded to establish a bi-lateral relationship with the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs this year.

The bilateral table acts as the central hub to address the collective interests of AIAI member Nations, and set a direction for shared priorities.

The following five priorities have been identified as the most pressing areas of focus at this time:

1. Child Welfare
2. Taxation (gas and tobacco)
3. Ending Violence
4. Treaties
5. Education

This relationship includes both a political leadership table inclusive of the AIAI Chief's Council and co-chaired by Grand Chief Peters and Minister Zimmer as well as a joint technical table comprised of policy staff from both AIAI and the Ministry.

The focus for this year has been to lay the groundwork for this new relationship. We are eager to work collaboratively with the Ministry to identify solutions to critical issues in our communities.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Two meetings of the political leadership table held in November and March
- Approval of a joint strategic work plan to identify issues and solutions within each priority area
- Two meetings of the joint technical table in October and February
- Terms of reference drafted and pending approval

## Child Welfare

As an outcome from the Chiefs Council Strategic Planning Session in October 2015, Child Welfare has been identified as the number one priority issue for AIAI moving forward.

AIAI has identified the following overarching issues with respect to Child Welfare in Ontario:

- Delegated authority under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)
- Funding mechanism: the 1965 Welfare Agreement
- Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy

AIAI has also identified the following community based issues:

- Designation process under the CFSA doesn't meet the needs of the Member Nations
- Funding issues – lack of workers, resources and legal supports for communities
- Education for members of the justice system

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Working together with MAA to begin addressing issues affecting Member Nations
- Identified issues with respect to Child Welfare including the overarching and community based issues affecting Member Nations

## Taxation - Tobacco and Gasoline

As one of the priority areas for the bi-lateral relationship with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, taxation was identified as an issue that AIAI Member Nations would like to address. The federal and provincial governments are continuously trying to regulate the sale of gasoline and tobacco on First Nations communities.

It is the position of AIAI's Member Nations that it is our right to trade tobacco and to transport it from one community to another free from interference and taxation from Canadian and Ontario governments. In order to have complete jurisdiction over tobacco in our Member Nations we need to remove the allocation systems and retail agreements.

AIAI's Chiefs Council has also indicated that gasoline is another issue with regards to taxation to be addressed in future negotiations.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Participated in the review process of the allocation system
- Taxation has been secured as a priority at the bi-lateral table with the province of Ontario
- A letter was sent to the Minister of Finance putting forth the Chiefs Council's position with regards to the allocation system and review process

## Education

Under the Education priority, it was agreed upon to establish a relationship with the Ministry of Education to further discuss First Nations issues and to develop a strategy encompassing:

- Native language revitalization and certification of language speakers
- Increasing First Nations visibility in schools
- Native studies curriculum and course coding
- Increasing accountability to First Nations on the Aboriginal framework and student self-identification
- First Nations issues pertaining to the Education Act. E.g. school facilities, trustee representation
- Increasing funding for post-secondary students by seeking other funding avenues available e.g. housing subsidies

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Presented a leave document at the Days in the Legislature annual meeting
- Meetings held with Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to identify priorities and a draft strategic work plan

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"We need to return to Indigenous-led education systems that put our kids first and enables them to succeed in ways that western-based education models do not."

- Grand Chief Gord Peters

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## Treaties

The implementation of Treaties along with public awareness and education remain an on-going priority for AIAI.

With the establishment of the bi-lateral relationship with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, AIAI's Chiefs Council is utilizing this process to resolve issues that have prevented the government from upholding its Treaty obligations in the past.

In addition, AIAI's Chiefs Council has supported the development of public awareness and educational tools that will promote the importance of Treaties and the Treaty relationship.

## 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Final stages of launching a treaty education website and video series

## Community Safety

The safety and security of our communities was identified as a priority at the 2015 Annual General Assembly. Leadership were adamant that safety and security extended beyond policing and further include community wellness, fire services and emergency medical services. This was captured in Resolution 07/15 entitled "Community Safety".

AIAI's Chiefs Council has identified this as a joint priority with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. As a first step, the work is being targeted towards ending violence against Indigenous women.

AIAI continues to explore alternative approaches to First Nations policing and advocating for the expansion emergency services.

## 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Securing additional funds to hold community discussions on finding solutions to ending violence in our communities
- Actively working with the Health and Social Advisory Board to draft an environmental scan in order to determine root causes that contribute to unsafe communities



## Chiefs Council Working Groups

## Health & Social Advisory Board Restructuring

AIAI's Chiefs Council established a Restructuring Task Force to conduct a review of the Health/Social Advisory Board (H/SAB) to increase its efficiency in order to support the Indigenous Reclamation process within AIAI and its Member First Nations.

### The following changes were made to the roles and responsibilities of the H/SAB:

- Reinstated the advocacy role of the Board to promote a rights-based perspective
- Identify and address issues on restrictive policy directives and legislation to allow Nations the opportunities to provide programs and services that meet community need
- Support the implementation of the AIAI Strategic Plan
- Support the implementation of the Chiefs Council priorities as it relates to the bi-lateral relationship with the Government of Ontario
- Support the implementation of Annual General Assembly mandates and resolutions pertaining to Health and Social Services

## 2015/2016 Accomplishments

The Restructuring Task Force identified five main recommendations that are currently being implemented:

- **Board Composition:** to address a gap in social services representation, a third representative from each Member Nation was added
- **Human Resource Capacity:** to assist in fulfilling the Health and Social Services mandates/resolutions, a Health Policy Analyst position will be created
- **H/SAB Chiefs Forum:** the Task Force determined that the value of the Annual H/SAB Chiefs Forum has diminished over the years as it has become a session for updates only and is no longer required
- **Meeting Frequency:** in place of the Chiefs Forum, the H/SAB will attend the AIAI Annual General Assembly. Face to face meetings will be reduced from four to two times per year, with an option for a third meeting if required
- **AHWS Program Evaluation:** Member Nations are to conduct an internal evaluation of their AHWS programs and shelters to determine if the delivery of programs and services can be expanded or improved

## H/SAB's New Strategic Plan

In 2001, the Health/Social Advisory Board (H/SAB) accepted their 20-year strategic plan which set goals for the development of laws in the areas of health and social services. Although there have been some achievements working with the long-range strategic plan, the need was identified for the H/SAB to re-prioritize their issues and move toward a more achievable, operationalized and outcome-based strategic plan.

In October 2015, the H/SAB developed a new five-year strategic plan based on the current health and social services needs of the member Nations.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

The five-year H/SAB Strategic Plan sets short, medium and long-term milestones in addressing the following seven strategic priority areas:

- Operations and resources
- Knowledge sharing and research
- Health care service provision (includes NIHB, seniors, mental health, safety and security)
- Health management and operation
- Child welfare
- Environmental issues impacting health
- Health and social related housing issues

## Education

### Jurisdiction

AIAI's Education Committee continues to work on a lifelong Education Law Framework toolkit. The toolkit is to assist First Nations in exercising their education jurisdiction in their communities. This past year, the committee has had the opportunity to:

- Develop education governance options
- Identify delivery systems models
- Develop a jurisdiction transition model
- Set cultural standards for community, schools and educators
- Create a community-based strategic plan for adult to elder stages of learning

### Funding

Resulting from years of lobbying efforts at all levels, the Federal Government made the following commitments in the five-year budget tabled in 2016:

- \$2.6 billion dollars over the next five years to improve primary and secondary education for First Nations,
- \$969.4 million over five years for school facilities

Unfortunately, there was no funding commitment for the Post- Secondary Student Support program.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Withdrawal of Bill C-33 – the “First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act”
- A funding commitment to improve elementary and secondary education and school facilities
- Completion of phase three of the AIAI Education Law Framework



## Child Welfare

As an outcome from the Chiefs Council Strategic Planning Session in October 2016, a Child Welfare working group was organized to discuss the current child welfare system issues and opportunities and to assist the member Nations in moving forward with their own Child Welfare initiatives by developing a community based Jurisdictional framework.

The working group is expected to continually meet throughout the 2016-2017 fiscal year and to continue working together to discuss opportunities and to develop recommendations in addressing shared issues with the child welfare system and improving the member Nations' Jurisdiction and outcomes over the wellbeing of their children and families.

The working group is comprised of Member Nations' technicians who have experience and background in Child Welfare and Member Nation leadership.

## 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Developed a Child Welfare Jurisdictional Framework to assist the Member Nations with their own Child Welfare discussions and initiatives
- Created a forum for community technicians to network, to share experiences and solutions to shared issues
- Created a group that can discuss issues and develop recommendations for Leaderships consideration

### Youth Leadership and Engagement Initiative

This year, AIAI led the development of a youth leadership and engagement initiative.

This initiative was completed in two phases. The first phase in February, 2016 provided one front line worker from each Member Nation community with youth leadership training. The youth workers had the opportunity to learn about the teenage brain, and gained new ideas for engaging the youth in their communities. During this session the group identified areas where they could successfully engage youth in their communities. Key priorities emerged including the need for new ways to reach and engage the youth to give them a voice, to find out what is important to youth today, the need for youth councils, and issues affecting youth today.

In the second phase of this initiative the youth workers in each community were provided with funds and tools to conduct an engagement session within their own communities. The results were helpful for the communities as they were able to utilize feedback from the sessions to improve services to their youth. It proved to be a valuable means of communication for the youth to have a voice on issues that are important to them.

Information gathered will assist in building an AIAI Youth Strategy. Common areas identified will also be discussed further and strategized by the newly formed Youth Networking Group consisting of a youth worker from each Member Nation.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Formation of Youth Networking Group for AIAI
- More than 70 youth engaged from AIAI communities
- Communities are more aware of Youth issues and how to address their needs
- Common issues identified by the youth include the need for culture, bullying to be addressed, mental health supports, and opportunities for camps and gatherings with other youth





## Raise Her Up Gathering

Raise Her Up was a youth gathering that aimed to empower young women and men by grounding them in traditional teachings and stories and to help them use those teachings to respect one another, to foster healthy relationships, and to help them to better understand their roles in their communities.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Help youth understand what are healthy relationship and how to increase their own safety
- Youth gathering assisted in family violence prevention efforts

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## First Nation Student Nutrition Program

In the Spring of 2015, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services introduced the First Nation Student Nutrition Program, an expansion of their existing Student Nutrition Program.

AIAI supported Member Nations by hosting a two-day engagement session to discuss the Student Nutrition Program, and to discuss how the program could be beneficial to the Member Nations. Following the engagement, AIAI supported Member Nations in their pursuit of funding for a Student Nutrition Program in their communities.

### 2015/2016 Accomplishments

- Informed the Member Nations of the new funding opportunities within the First Nation Student Nutrition Program
- Member Nations successfully secured funding to support Student Nutrition Programs in their communities

## Staff List



Ashley Albert  
Policy Advisor



Elly Antone  
HIV/AIDS Educator



Sherry Antone  
Policy Advisor



Brandy Cornelius  
H/SAB Coordinator &  
Community Development  
Specialist



Carolyn Doxtator  
Healthy Lifestyles  
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Tanis Doxtator  
Finance Manager



Zachariah General  
Policy Advisor



Lisa Jackson  
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Gambling Educator



Gina McGahey  
Policy Advisor



Suzanne Nicholas  
Health & Wellness  
Coordinator



Alyson Ninhan  
Administrative Support/  
Reception

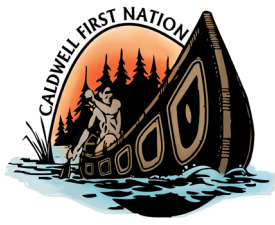


Shayna Phillips  
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Delaware Nation



Moravian of the Thames

