REGISTRY REVIEW CITIZEN CONSULTATIONS

WHAT WE HEARD

REPORT

Métis Nation of Ontario
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Background & Context .................................................................................................................. 4
   A) The MNO ............................................................................................................................. 4
   B) Evolution of the MNO Registry & MNO’s Citizenship Requirements ..................................... 6
      (i) Early Definitions (1994-2004) ......................................................................................... 6
      (iii) The Powley Case (2003) ............................................................................................... 7
      (iv) A New Definition (2004) ............................................................................................... 9
      (v) The MNO Registry Policy & Province-Wide Consultations (2009-2014) .......................... 9
   C) The Registry Review .............................................................................................................. 13
      (i) Initiation (2017) ............................................................................................................. 13
      (ii) The Process (2017-2021) ............................................................................................ 15
      (iii) Key Findings & Results ............................................................................................... 16

II. Citizen Consultations on the Registry Review ............................................................................ 18
   A) Mandate for Consultation .................................................................................................... 18
   B) The Consultation Process .................................................................................................... 18
      (i) Virtual Town Halls (June-September 2021) .................................................................. 18
      (ii) Online Feedback Portal (February-April 2022) ............................................................. 19
      (iii) MNO Leadership Rendezvous (May 2022) ................................................................ 19

III. What We Heard ....................................................................................................................... 21
   A) Overview of Section ............................................................................................................ 21
   B) Key Themes & Issues .......................................................................................................... 21
      (i) Métis rights and the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose ............................................... 21
      (ii) Integrity and legitimacy of the MNO and the MNO Registry ........................................ 22
      (iii) Current and future citizenship requirements ............................................................... 22
      (iv) Barriers to accessing genealogical information and requests for increased support .... 23
      (v) Métis adoption and Indian Act deregistration ............................................................... 24
      (vi) Requests for an appeal/reconsideration process for citizen registration decisions ....... 24
      (vii) Moving forward and responding to “Incomplete” files ............................................. 24

IV. What’s Next / Next Steps ....................................................................................................... 26
   Appendix A: MNO Statement of Prime Purpose .................................................................... 27
   Appendix B: PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08 ....................................................................... 29
   Appendix C: PCMNO Resolution PC210528-09 ..................................................................... 30
   Appendix D: MNO Registry Review Online Feedback Portal (Survey) Results ..................... 33
This report has been developed by the Métis Nation of Ontario ("MNO") pursuant to resolution PC210528-09 of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario ("PCMNO"), which called for the development of a “What We Heard” report based on the MNO’s province-wide consultations related to the final report of the “MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process” ("Registry Review"). The input, ideas, proposals, statements, suggestions, points of view, and perspectives set out in this report are without prejudice to the legal positions of the MNO and the rights-bearing Métis communities in Ontario that it represents. For greater certainty, the MNO does not endorse any of the specific input, ideas, proposals, statements, suggestions, points of view, or perspectives that emerged during the province-wide consultations and/or may be outlined in this report. This report has been developed as an internal discussion document only and should not be used for any other purpose.
I. Background & Context

A) The MNO

In 1993, the MNO was established through the collective will of Métis people and communities in Ontario coming together to create a Métis-specific governance structure. Over the past 29 plus years, the MNO has evolved into a sophisticated and well-respected, province-wide Métis government in the eyes of its people, other governments, and third parties. Prior to 1993, Métis had been involved in pan-Indigenous lobby groups and organizations. The MNO, however, was not created to represent all individuals and communities that claim to be Métis. Rather, the MNO represents the seven historic Métis communities in Ontario and the individuals ancestrally connecting to those communities and/or to other parts of the Métis Nation in western Canada.

During its initial meetings, Métis representatives from communities throughout the province set out the foundational vision for the MNO. This vision is encapsulated in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose (see Appendix A), which sets out the following aims and objectives of the MNO, in addition to others:

- “to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario;”
- “to establish democratic institutions based on our inherent right of self-government;”
- “to ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms and in so doing, act in a spirit of cooperation with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;”
- “to establish good relations and maintain our historic alliances with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals;” and
- “to gain the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people.”

The MNO has made considerable progress in advancing the above aims and objectives, as well as many others included in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose.

Notably, the MNO has built an impressive province-wide governance structure that includes:

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• an objectively-verifiable, centralized registry ("MNO Registry") of over 29,000 MNO citizens;

• governance structures at the provincial (i.e., PCMNO), regional (i.e., 9 MNO Regional Councillors), and local (i.e., 30 active Chartered Community Councils) levels;

• an Annual General Assembly ("AGA") that provides an opportunity for MNO citizens to gather together, review the achievements of the previous year, and chart the direction for the future; and

• a charitable foundation which promotes and supports Métis culture and heritage (i.e., Métis Nation of Ontario Cultural Commission).

The MNO’s governance structure also reflects and incorporates a diversity of Métis perspectives and experiences through the inclusion of designated positions and councils representative of Métis women, youth, senators, veterans and 2SLGBTQ+ people.

The MNO has also achieved many great successes related to securing recognition and respect for Métis section 35 rights in Ontario both inside and outside of the courts. In addition to advancing Powley—i.e., the first Supreme Court of Canada ("SCC") decision to affirm the constitutionally-protected harvesting rights of the Métis—the MNO has also signed various historical and significant agreements with the Crown, including the:

• MNO-Canada Consultation Agreement (2015);

• MNO-Canada-Ontario Framework Agreement on Advancing Reconciliation (2017);

• MNO-Canada Agreement on Advancing Reconciliation with the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (2017);

• MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement on Métis Harvesting (2018); and


In addition, the MNO has built an accountable, results-based provincial delivery structure to meet the socio-economic needs of its citizens and communities. Currently, the MNO delivers programs and services to its citizens through various MNO branches, including:

• Healing and Wellness;
• Education and Training;
• Housing and Infrastructure;
• Lands, Resources and Consultation;
• Economic Development; and
• Rights, Research and Policy.

Through these various branches, the MNO maintains over 30 service delivery access points across the province and employs approximately 340 personnel throughout Ontario.
B) Evolution of the MNO Registry & MNO’s Citizenship Requirements

In 1994, the MNO’s centralized registry was created “to identify and register Métis citizens and harvesters who are eligible rights holders in the province of Ontario.” The MNO Registry has played a significant role in setting the MNO apart from other pan-Indigenous “groups” and “associations,” as well as advancing one of the above-noted foundational aims and objectives of the MNO to: “research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario.”

Today, the MNO’s centralized registry has grown to over 29,000 citizens—the vast majority of whom have been verified through the Registry Review as section 35 rights-holders through their satisfaction of the MNO’s current citizenship requirements as outlined in the MNO Bylaws and the MNO Registry Policy (see below). The MNO Registry is currently located at the MNO’s Head Office in Ottawa and employs a full-time Registrar and 25 other staff.

As further detailed below, the MNO Registry—like most Indigenous government registries—has encountered and had to adapt to various challenges over the course of its history and evolution, including challenges related to a historical lack of stable funding and capacity, effective communication, and standardized policies and procedures, etc. in its early years. For example, prior to 2004, the MNO received little to no funding to maintain a standardized and objectively verifiable registry, relying primarily on the work of volunteers. During this time (and up until 2009), the MNO also had yet to develop clear policies and procedures to guide the MNO Registrar’s assessment and approval of MNO citizenship applications, leading to the interim development of ad hoc internal systems and processes.

Irrespective of these developments, the MNO has always discussed any challenges related to its centralized registry in an open, honest, and transparent manner, as well as has consistently sought direction from MNO citizens on the path forward and in a manner consistent with the aims and objectives set out in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose.

(i) Early Definitions (1994-2004)

Prior to 2004, the MNO’s definition of “Métis” only required an ancestral connection to an Aboriginal ancestor, not a Métis ancestor. For example, an early definition of “Métis” read:

anyone of Aboriginal ancestry who self-identifies as Métis, has at least one grandparent who is Aboriginal, and whose application for admission as a citizen is accepted by the MNO.3

Despite developments in 2002 and 2003, the MNO’s formal citizenship requirements did not change until 2004 (further discussed below).

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(ii) **The National Definition (2002)**

In September 2002, after years of extensive consultations, discussions, and debates, the Governing Members of the Métis National Council (“MNC”)—which includes the MNO—unanimously adopted the National Definition for Citizenship within the Métis Nation (“National Definition”) at the MNC General Assembly, which provided that:

“Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

“Historic Métis Nation” means the Aboriginal people, then known as Métis or Half-breeds, who resided in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

“Historic Métis Nation Homeland” means the area of land in west-central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-breeds as they were then known.

“Métis Nation” the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” within the meaning of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

“Distinct from other Aboriginal peoples” means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.

The MNO agreed to the National Definition on the basis that the definition’s geographic descriptor of “the area of land in west-central North America” unequivocally included the Métis communities within Ontario represented by the MNO—including, but not limited to the Métis community of Sault Ste. Marie whose rights were simultaneously being considered by the SCC in Powley (further discussed below).

Due to the MNC’s non-governmental legal structure (i.e., as a national advocacy body), the National Definition did not have any legal force or effect until it was ratified by each of the democratically-elected Métis governments that create the MNC (i.e., the MNC Governing Members). Over the next two years, through amendments to their constituting documents (e.g., bylaws, constitution, etc.), each Métis government ratified and incorporated the National Definition in their respective jurisdiction. For the MNO, that process culminated in 2004 (discussed below).

(iii) **The Powley Case (2003)**

As noted above, Powley is the first SCC decision to affirm the constitutionally-protected harvesting rights of the Métis. The MNO successfully advanced Powley as a test case on Métis rights from

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trial to the highest court over the course of nearly a decade. In that time, fourteen judges across four levels of court—i.e., the Ontario Court of Justice (OCJ), Superior Court of Justice (SCJ), Ontario Court of Appeal (ONCA), and SCC\(^5\)—all agreed that the Powleys have section 35 Métis harvesting rights by virtue of their ancestral connection to the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community. In arriving at this conclusion, the courts made several key findings related to Métis identity and Métis registries, among other key topics.\(^6\)

In 2003, consistent with the position advanced by the MNO, the SCC confirmed three broad indicia for establishing Métis identity: self-identification, ancestral connection, and acceptance by the modern community. The SCC elaborated on each of these criteria as follows:

31 First, the claimant must self-identify as a member of a Métis community. This self-identification should not be of recent vintage…

32 Second, the claimant must present evidence of an ancestral connection to a historic Métis community. This objective requirement ensures that beneficiaries of s. 35 rights have a real link to the historic community whose practices ground the right being claimed. We would not require a minimum “blood quantum”, but we would require some proof that the claimant’s ancestors belonged to the historic Métis community by birth, adoption, or other means….

33 Third, the claimant must demonstrate that he or she is accepted by the modern community whose continuity with the historic community provides the legal foundation for the right being claimed. Membership in a Métis political organization may be relevant to the question of community acceptance, but it is not sufficient in the absence of a contextual understanding of the membership requirements of the organization and its role in the Métis community. The core of community acceptance is past and ongoing participation in a shared culture, in the customs and traditions that constitute a Métis community’s identity and distinguish it from other groups….

The SCC also emphasized the importance of identifying legitimate Métis rights holders through the development of standardized and objectively verifiable registry systems:

While determining membership in the Métis community might not be as simple as verifying membership in, for example, an Indian band, this does not detract from the status of Métis people as full-fledged rights-bearers. As Métis communities continue to organize themselves more formally and to assert their constitutional rights, it is imperative that membership requirements become more standardized so that legitimate rights-holders can be identified… The inquiry must take into


\(^7\) \emph{Powley}, paras 31–33 (emphasis in original).
account both the value of community self-definition and the need for the process of identification to be objectively verifiable.\(^8\)

In order to verify M\(é\)tis section 35 rights-holders, the SCC articulated that these systems required objectively verifiable, documented proof that the individuals in the system ancestrally connect to historic rights-bearing M\(é\)tis communities:

It is important to remember that, no matter how a contemporary community defines membership, only those members with a demonstrable ancestral connection to the historic community can claim a s. 35 right. Verifying membership is crucial since individuals are only entitled to exercise M\(é\)tis aboriginal rights by virtue of their ancestral connection to and current membership in a M\(é\)tis community.\(^9\)

\(\text{(iv)}\) \(\text{A New Definition (2004)}\)

In 2004, the MNO amended its bylaws to include a new four-part definition of “M\(é\)tis,” consistent with its operationalization of the National Definition and the SCC decision in \textit{Powley}.\(^{10}\) This definition, which is currently included in article 4(a) of the MNO Bylaws states:

M\(é\)tis means a person who self-identifies as M\(é\)tis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic M\(é\)tis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the M\(é\)tis Nation.\(^{11}\)

To be eligible for MNO citizenship, article 5(a) of the MNO Bylaws further requires applicants to provide “sufficient documentation that he or she is M\(é\)tis within the meaning of 4(a).”\(^{12}\)

Unlike M\(é\)tis citizens in the Prairie provinces who may rely solely on M\(é\)tis scrip records for their M\(é\)tis identification, the MNO had to develop its own policy for identifying M\(é\)tis citizens in Ontario in order to operationalize this new definition based on the MNO’s longstanding and well-known M\(é\)tis rights assertions within Ontario (i.e., the Sault Ste. Marie M\(é\)tis community and other M\(é\)tis communities outside of northwestern Ontario). As discussed below, the MNO Registry did not have policy direction on the implementation of the new definition to MNO citizens until 2009, leading to the development of interim ad hoc internal systems and processes.

\(\text{(v)}\) \(\text{The MNO Registry Policy \\& Province-Wide Consultations (2009-2014)}\)

In 2009, the MNO adopted the Interim Registry Policy (“\textit{Interim Policy}”), which required all applicants, from 2009 onwards, to meet the MNO definition of “M\(é\)tis” adopted in 2004. The policy also provided greater clarity on the documentation required to prove certain elements of the definition, including an applicant’s ancestral connection to a historic M\(é\)tis Ancestor. While MNO citizens who were issued citizenship cards prior to 2009 were not required to meet the new

\(^{8}\) \textit{Powley}, para 29 (emphasis added).

\(^{9}\) \textit{Powley}, para 34 (emphasis added).

\(^{10}\) National Definition Fact Sheet.

\(^{11}\) MNO Bylaws, art 4.

\(^{12}\) MNO Bylaws, art 5.
definition or documentation requirements to maintain their citizenship, anyone who applied post-2009—including family members of current MNO citizens—needed to meet the MNO’s new requirements. This resulted in inconsistent and differing requirements for MNO citizenship files.

Recognizing the challenges that the MNO Registry has faced, MNO citizens have consistently reiterated the importance of strengthening and ensuring the independence and credibility of the MNO Registry. Notably, the 2010 MNO AGA passed a resolution calling for a “province-wide, multi-phased consultation process on Métis identification and registration...in order to develop consensus-based solutions to move the MNO forward based on its Statement of Prime Purpose and ultimate goals of advancing Métis rights and self-government in Ontario” (“2010 AGA Resolution”).

The 2010 AGA Resolution further recognized that “the MNO Registry is key to the MNO being a Métis government—not just a pan-aboriginal, membership-based association” and that “over the years, the MNO has never had the funding or opportunity to thoroughly engage and consult Métis citizens and communities on these Métis identification and registration issues.” It also provided that existing MNO citizens would not be removed from the MNO’s Registry except in accordance with the MNO Bylaws.

As a result of the 2010 AGA Resolution, the MNO conducted the “Métis Identification and Registry Consultations” in 26 communities across Ontario with well-over one thousand MNO citizen participants. The results of this province-wide engagement were compiled into a “What We Heard Report” (“2011 Report”) that was circulated to all MNO Community Councils, distributed at the 2011 AGA, and posted on the MNO’s website. Between January and March 2012, the MNO undertook a second series of community consultations focused on the major themes identified in the 2011 Report.

The 2011 Report recognized that the MNO Registry had faced significant challenges in previous years, including a lack of effective communication and education about the Interim Policy, lack of stable and ongoing funding which caused backlogs, and lack of MNO Registry staff training. One main suggestion put forward in the 2011 Report was to ensure that Métis rights are protected in any future decisions or initiatives related to Métis identification and registration. It was also recommended that the MNO create an Ontario Métis Root Ancestor database, which (as explained below) the MNO has made significant progress on.

In 2014, following the completion of these consultations, the MNO AGA adopted the Interim Policy as the formal MNO Registry Policy. Under the MNO Registry Policy, an applicant is responsible

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15 What We Heard Report, p 5.
16 What We Heard Report, p 15.
17 What We Heard Report, p 24.
for providing all the documents required to support their citizenship application to the MNO, including, but not limited to:  

- a signed declaration that the applicant self-identifies as Métis and is not registered on another Aboriginal registry (this is referred to as the Oath of Allegiance on the MNO citizenship application and satisfies the first two requirements under the MNO's definition of "Métis"—i.e., self-identification and distinct from other Aboriginal peoples); and

- proof of "Historic Métis Nation ancestry by providing evidence of a genealogical connection to a Métis Ancestor who lived in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland after 1750," as well as "documentary proof that links the applicant through each generation to [that] Métis ancestor" (this is completed through a genealogical chart and supporting documentation, and satisfies the third requirement under the MNO’s definition of "Métis"—i.e., historic Métis Nation ancestry).

The final criteria included in the MNO’s 2004 definition of Métis—i.e., community acceptance—is demonstrated by registration as an MNO citizen, which, as outlined in the MNO Registry Policy, is obtained through completion of the MNO’s registration requirements.  


Canada and Métis governments, including the MNO, collaborated on the creation of national standards to govern Métis registries. This work was completed in 2015 when the Canadian Standards Association published its standards on Métis Nation Registry Operations ("CSA Standards"). The CSA Standards incorporate and rely on the National Definition noted above.

The CSA Standards provide that the MNO Registry will be audited periodically. From Canada’s perspective, the MNO understands that these audits are critical as they provide third-party confirmation that the MNO Registry is “objectively verifiable” and consistent with the SCC’s direction in Powley. This allows Canada to rely on the MNO Registry for the purposes of identifying Métis s. 35 rights holders. This is explicitly stated in Canada’s policy on Métis harvesting—i.e., the Reference Manual for Federal Enforcement Personnel on Harvesting by Métis—which states that one of the criteria for determining whether or not a Métis membership card provides sufficient evidence that the holder may exercise Métis harvesting rights is that:

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19 MNO Registry Policy, ss 16–17.
20 MNO Registry Policy, ss 18 and 20.
21 MNO Registry Policy, ss 24–25.
22 Canadian Standard Association Group, Métis Nation Registry Operations Z710-15 (March 2015), s 3 ["CSA Standards"].
23 CSA Standards, s 6.1.
the government of Canada may audit the membership or harvester system to ensure that it is objectively verifiable and have confidence that it may be relied upon for the purposes of applying its harvesting policies.\textsuperscript{24}

The most recent audit of the MNO Registry was conducted in 2017 by an independent auditor selected by Canada (i.e., BDO). This 2017 audit concluded that:

the current MNO registry application process as it presently operates reflects the Powley decision, demonstrates objective verification for citizenship and is maintained with care and in a professional manner.\textsuperscript{25}

The MNO Registry, namely the MNO Harvester Card System, also underwent an objective and independent provincial review ("Independent Review") during this time.\textsuperscript{26} The results of the Independent Review were released in 2018 and further confirmed the validity of the MNO Registry’s processes. The Independent Review was motivated by a commitment made in the interim harvesting agreement ("Four Points Agreement") reached between the MNO and Ontario in 2004. That agreement provided for a limited number of MNO Harvester Cards until "an independent evaluation of the system...based on mutually agreeable terms of reference" could be performed.\textsuperscript{27}

In order for the Independent Review to be objective, the MNO and Ontario first had to identify “where” the historic Métis communities were located in Ontario, as well as, “who” was a part of those communities. In August 2017, the MNO and Ontario came to common understandings on the identification of six historic Métis communities in Ontario, in addition to the community recognized in Powley.\textsuperscript{28} At the same time, the MNO publicly released Métis Family Line documents that identified some of the families who made up these historic Métis communities.\textsuperscript{29} This preliminary work formed the foundation for the Independent Review since an independent third-party could now objectively verify whether and to what extent the MNO Registry’s files contained sufficient documentation to prove that MNO Harvester Card holders ancestrally connect to a historic Métis community.

The Independent Review was carried out by an independent third-party consulting firm, InterGroup Consultants ("InterGroup"), and consisted of two parts. The first part required


\textsuperscript{28} See: footnote 1 above.

\textsuperscript{29} For copies of the MNO’s VMFL reports, see: http://www.metisnation.org/registry/citizenship/ontario-m%C3%A9tis-root-ancestors/.
InterGroup to “verify,” using objective criteria determined by the MNO and Ontario,\(^{30}\) whether and to what extent the MNO Métis Family Lines were a part of one or more of the historic Métis communities; once verified, these lines became known as Verified Métis Family Lines (“VMFLs”). The second part required InterGroup to review a statistically significant sample of MNO Harvester Card files to “verify” whether and to what extent each file had sufficient documentation to meet the requirements outlined in *Powley* (i.e., whether each harvester self-identifies as Métis, ancestrally connects to a historic Métis community—through a connection to a VMFL—and is accepted by the modern-day Métis community).

The 2018 report concluded that: 100% of the then 88 Métis Family Lines submitted by the MNO were “verified” as being part of the historic Métis communities, and that 100% of the randomly selected 328 MNO Harvester Card files were “verified” as meeting the criteria set out in *Powley*. These results further validate the reliability of the MNO Registry system to identify which of its members can exercise collectively-held Métis harvesting rights in the province.\(^{31}\) It was on this basis that the MNO and Ontario negotiated to remove the 1250 cap on MNO Harvester Cards under the interim Four Points Agreement and signed the new *Framework Agreement on Métis Harvesting* in April 2018.\(^{32}\)

Consistent with the 2011 Report recommendation noted above—i.e., which called for the creation of an Ontario Métis Root Ancestor database—it is noted that the 88 VMFL packages reviewed during the Independent Review contained approximately 380 Métis “Root Ancestors” and 5,600 Métis “Root Ancestor Descendants.” As a result of subsequent work and research that database has grown to 119 VMFL packages containing 490 Métis “Root Ancestors” and approximately 6500 Métis “Root Ancestor Descendants,” and continues to grow as the VMFL work is ongoing. The genealogical links and historical documents from these reports were uploaded to the MNO Registry’s Secure Archival Source Historical (“SASH”) database used by Know History in conducting the Registry Review (further discussed in the section below).

**C) The Registry Review**

**(i) Initiation (2017)**

The content and completeness of MNO citizens’ files varied over time as a result of the above-noted legacy issues. In particular, it was understood that some MNO citizenship files may not meet the MNO’s current citizenship requirements as outlined in the MNO Bylaws and MNO

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\(^{30}\) The objective criteria required that: (1) the Métis Root Ancestor be a Documented Métis, (2) the Métis Root Ancestor ancestrally connect to the Historic Métis Community through documented evidence that they were present in the community prior to the date of effective European/ Canadian control in the area, and (3) the Métis Root Ancestor’s family line have a documented presence in the Historic Métis Community.


Registry Policy. This presented some challenges for the MNO’s self-government and Métis rights related work as well as impacted relations with neighbouring First Nations.\textsuperscript{33} 

The MNO’s work to identify and address these legacy issues through the Registry Review is part of the MNO’s continued process of refinement and standardization of its centralized registration systems and processes, which the SCC expressly called for in \textit{Powley}. 

On October 22, 2017, the MNO initiated an independent review of all current MNO citizenship files via PCMNO resolution PC171022-08 (see \textbf{Appendix B}).\textsuperscript{34} This review—which has come to be known as the Registry Review—was undertaken as a critical step to prepare the MNO for formal self-government and Métis rights negotiations with Canada and Ontario. In particular, the resolution directed “the MNO administration to retain the consulting firm Know History to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files [to determine if they meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship] in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship cards.”\textsuperscript{35} Specifically, the PCMNO directed that the Registry Review provide for the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a.] Files that are determined to meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship, including, identification of whether these individuals ancestrally connect to one of the identified seven historic Métis communities in Ontario or the Métis Nation in western Canada (i.e., through Métis scrip, land grants, etc.), will be issued a new MNO citizenship card.
  
  \item[b.] Files that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship will be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent to these MNO citizens and provide them with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.
\end{itemize}

In \textit{Green}, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice commented on the purpose of the Registry Review as being linked to the MNO’s broader Métis rights and self-government agenda:

The MNO’s changing citizenship criteria over the years were not: “intended to … target specific individuals or families but to advance [its] collective “aims and objectives” so as to better position itself to establish Métis s. 35 rights and ultimately negotiate a self-government agreement… The purpose of the [Review] was to ensure [MNO] was representing folks who meet the criteria that would satisfy the \textit{Powley} test. Again, it was necessary to ensure it was properly

\textsuperscript{33} As noted above, the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose provides that the MNO’s aims and objectives include: “act[ing] in a spirit of cooperation with other Aboriginal…people” in the advancement of Métis rights; “establish[ing] good relations and maintain[ing]…historic alliances with all Aboriginal peoples”; and “gain[ing] the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people.”

\textsuperscript{34} See: MNO, “MNO launches Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process,” (31 October 2017), online: \url{https://www.metisnation.org/news/rsrp-1/}.

\textsuperscript{35} PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08 (22 October 2017).
positioned to negotiate a self-government agreement, and is [in] a process to do so.\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{(ii) The Process (2017-2021)}

The Registry Review, which took over three years to complete, involved an independent review of all the MNO’s citizenship files to determine whether they meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy. In order to show leadership in the review and to provide MNO citizens with certainty that they are being represented by Métis rights-holders at the regional and provincial levels, the Registry Review started with a review of all elected leadership’s citizenship files (i.e., members of the PCMNO).\textsuperscript{37}

Throughout the course of the review, the PCMNO and the MNO administration provided regular updates on the progress of the Registry Review, including: memos to all citizens, updates at MNO AGAs, articles in the Métis Voyageur newspaper, and the maintenance of a dedicated website with readily-available materials that all citizens can access.

During the review, citizenship files were designated by the independent reviewer, Know History, as either:

- \textbf{“Complete”} meaning they contained all the documents needed to demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis Ancestor and a signed Oath of Allegiance (i.e., the file satisfies the MNO’s current citizenship requirements);

- \textbf{“Missing Documentation”} meaning they included a Métis Ancestor but needed additional documentation to support a genealogical connection or, in some cases, were missing a signed Oath of Allegiance (i.e., the file could satisfy the MNO’s current citizenship requirements upon receipt of missing documentation); or

- \textbf{“Incomplete”} meaning they lacked a historic record identifying an ancestor as Métis (i.e., the file does not satisfy the MNO’s current citizenship requirements).

The assessment results were communicated to each MNO citizen in writing. MNO citizens who were notified that their files are “Complete” were also provided with a form that needed to be completed, signed, and submitted along with a new picture, in order to be issued their new MNO citizenship card. MNO citizens who were notified that their files are “Missing Documentation” or are “Incomplete” were provided with notice of the documentation needed to complete their files, information on how to submit such documentation for re-assessment, and contact information and resources to assist with any questions. Re-assessment requests are ongoing.

\textsuperscript{36} Green v MNO, 2021 ONSC 5808, paras 13, 15.
As per resolution PC171022-08, citizens with missing documentation are to be provided “with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.”\(^{38}\) No direction, however, has previously been provided on what constitutes “a fair and reasonable time” or what steps the MNO might pursue if the missing information is not provided. As per PCMNO direction and the requirements in the MNO Registry Policy, the Registry Review did not result in the removal of any individual’s MNO citizenship.\(^ {39}\)

(iii) Key Findings & Results

As further detailed below, the results of the Registry Review provide the MNO with further clarity on who exactly the MNO represents (i.e., verified section 35 rights-holders) and where those citizens ancestrally connect to (i.e., all seven of the historic Métis communities in Ontario—with a particular concentration in the Upper Great Lakes area—as well as to other parts of the Historic Métis Nation Homeland west of Ontario). Furthermore, it confirms that the MNO has an objectively verifiable, transparent, and accountable registry system that is based on the application of stringent criteria.


As of September 2021, of the 26,710 MNO citizenship files reviewed by that time,\(^ {41}\) the Registry Review concluded that:

- 75% of files were confirmed to include documentation needed to demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis Ancestor, with 92% of those files being designated as “Complete,” and 5% designated as “Missing Documentation,” but could become “Complete” upon receipt of additional documents (e.g. a signed Oath of Allegiance, genealogical documentation);
- 77% of those with “Complete” files trace to a Métis Ancestor in Ontario, with 16% of those also tracing to Métis Ancestor(s) documented west of Ontario;
- 23% of those with “Complete” files trace to a Métis Ancestor documented in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland west of Ontario only;

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\(^ {38}\) PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08 (22 October 2017).
\(^ {39}\) MNO Registry Policy, s 5.
\(^ {41}\) Note: as of the date of this report, the MNO Registry consists of over 29,000 citizenship files.
• Of the 77% files connecting to Métis Ancestors in historic Métis communities in Ontario: 59% connect to a single VMFL, 35% connect to multiple VMFLs in the province, and 6% trace to Métis Ancestors in historic Métis communities not yet approved as part of a VMFL;

• Citizens with “Complete” files connect to all seven historic Métis communities in Ontario, with 64% connecting to the historic Métis communities in the Upper Great Lakes area (i.e., Northern Lake Superior, Killarney, Georgian Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie);

• 20% of files reviewed were designated as “Incomplete” meaning that they lack a historic record identifying any of the citizen’s ancestors as Métis;

• 1,154 files were determined to be inactive because of death, suspension, or withdrawal; and

• Fewer than 1% of files reviewed remain “In Process” due to ongoing reconsideration and review.

The concentration of MNO citizens tracing to the Upper Great Lakes area is notable given that the evidence before the court in Powley supported a connection to a broader community in the Upper Great Lakes region. In Powley, the SCC agreed with the trial judge’s findings that “a distinctive Métis community emerged in the Upper Great Lakes region in the mid-17th century, and peaked around 1850,” but expressly left open the question of whether and to what extent there exists a broader Métis people in the Upper Great Lakes area:

A Métis community can be defined as a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographic area and sharing a common way of life. The respondents here claim membership in the Métis community centred in and around Sault Ste. Marie. It is not necessary for us to decide, and we did not receive submissions on, whether this community is also a Métis “people”, or whether it forms part of a larger Métis people that extends over a wider area such as the Upper Great Lakes.42

In addition to the above key findings and results, the procedures developed as part of the Registry Review (e.g., the SASH database, a set of Registry guidelines, and a streamlined approach to processing application) have become the core management tools used by the MNO Registry. This groundwork helps to set a foundation for the MNO’s eventual transition to a Métis Government fully recognized in Canadian law, pursuant to the mutually-agreeable process outlined in the MNO-Canada Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement signed in June 2019.43

42 Powley, para 12.
II. Citizen Consultations on the Registry Review

A) Mandate for Consultation

On May 28, 2021, the PCMNO passed resolution PC210528-09 (see Appendix C) approving of and directing the MNO administration to implement the following next steps related to the Registry Review:

1. Develop and release a series of communication tools (e.g., a copy of the Registry Review Final Report, an updated fact sheet, an informational video, social media outreach, etc.);

2. Undertake province-wide consultation with MNO citizens through a series of virtual town hall meetings open to all MNO citizens during the summer of 2021;

3. Develop a “What We Heard” report based on the province-wide consultations to be publicly released following review and consideration by the PCMNO; and

4. Hold a province-wide vote (in Fall/Winter 2021) and/or special assembly on MNO citizenship (in Fall/Winter 2021 or early 2022, subject to public health and safety requirements) to guide further decision-making on next steps related to the Registry Review Final Report and/or potential amendments needed to the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy.

B) The Consultation Process

(i) Virtual Town Halls (June-September 2021)

Beginning in Summer 2021, under the direction of resolution PC210528-09, the MNO held a series of province-wide town halls, as well as an MNO leadership engagement session, to engage deeply about the results of the Registry Review. Throughout this process, the MNO gathered citizens’ views on how to implement the findings of the Registry Review to further advance the MNO’s Métis rights and self-government agenda as outlined in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose.

A total of seven (7) province-wide consultation sessions were held and attended by over four hundred (400) MNO citizens. These sessions, which were open to all current MNO citizens, were conducted virtually and held on the following dates:

- June 22, 2021
- June 24, 2021
- June 25, 2021
- July 7, 2021
- July 14, 2021
- September 22, 2021
- September 23, 2021
In addition to the all-citizen consultation sessions, one (1) additional session was specifically held for regional and Community Council leadership. The leadership town hall, which was attended by 156 participants, was held virtually on June 22, 2021.

In all sessions, participants—whether citizens and/or MNO leadership—had the opportunity to listen to information, ask questions, and provide their comments and feedback.

The purpose of the citizen and leadership consultation sessions was to:

- provide information to citizens about the Registry Review process, findings, and potential impacts;
- provide an opportunity for citizens to ask questions and share their views related to the Registry Review;
- allow the MNO an opportunity to directly engage with MNO citizens on a critically important issue and development; and
- gather citizens’ views on how to implement the findings of the Registry Review Final Report to further advance self-government and Métis rights.

(ii) **Online Feedback Portal (February-April 2022)**

Building on the MNO’s virtual town hall consultation sessions, an online feedback portal was launched to provide all MNO citizens with an additional opportunity to provide feedback on the Registry Review. The online feedback portal consisted of multiple choice and long answer questions aimed at collecting citizens’ views on the MNO’s Métis rights and self-government agenda, the potential implications of the Registry Review findings on this agenda, and potential next steps and timelines for responding to and/or implementing the Registry Review findings. The online portal was open from February 24, 2022 to April 11, 2022. A total of 472 responses were collected. A copy of the online feedback portal questions and graphs summarizing the results is included in Appendix D.

To ensure only MNO citizens could provide input through the online feedback portal, participants were required to provide their name and MNO citizenship number. This information was for identification purposes only and kept strictly confidential. All data collected through the online feedback portal has been anonymized, meaning no response is associated with or attributed to a particular individual.

(iii) **MNO Leadership Rendezvous (May 2022)**

In May 2022, MNO leadership—including the PCMNO, MNO Regional councillors, senators, youth, Community Council members—as well as other MNO citizens, were invited to attend an in-person MNO Leadership Rendezvous session. The session was held at JW Marriott Rosseau Resort and Spa in Lake Rosseau from May 4th to 8th 2022, and attended by 392 MNO citizens and leadership.
During the gathering, MNO staff provided a status update on the Registry Review consultation process, as well as allotted time for a question and answer session. A comment box was also made available for citizens to provide any additional thoughts, comments, questions, and/or feedback. A total of 17 responses were received through the comment box.

Throughout the consultation process, the MNO continued to provide additional updates and information directly to citizens through direct correspondence, the Métis Voyageur, as well as the MNO’s designated Registry Review webpage.
III. What We Heard

A) Overview of Section

This section contains a summary of the feedback, points of view, questions, and suggestions that the MNO heard directly from citizens during the above-noted province-wide Registry Review consultation process.

Feedback from MNO citizens generally fell into the following seven (7) broad themes and issues, each of which is further discussed below:

1. Métis rights and the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose;
2. Integrity and legitimacy of the MNO and the MNO Registry;
3. Current and future citizenship requirements;
4. Barriers to accessing genealogical information and requests for increased support;
5. Métis adoption and Indian Act deregistration;
6. Moving forward and dealing with “Incomplete” files; and
7. Requests for an appeal/reconsideration process for citizen registration decisions.

B) Key Themes & Issues

(i) Métis rights and the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

Throughout the consultation process, MNO citizens indicated strong support for Métis rights and the principles embedded in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose. For example, nearly all citizens who participated in the online feedback portal confirmed that they believe in and support Métis rights (i.e., 99%) and/or expressed support for the prioritization of the advancement of Métis rights and self-government as outlined in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose (96%). The majority of comments received from citizens during the virtual town hall sessions also demonstrated strong support of the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose. In both the online feedback portal and town hall sessions, participants expressed concern that continuing to accept non-rights holding individuals as MNO citizens could undermine the aims and objectives set out in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose, as well as risk jeopardizing the MNO’s progress towards self-government work to date.

Métis rights and way of life also featured prominently during the virtual town hall sessions. In particular, many comments were received that spoke to the importance of the Métis way of life, the practice of land-based activities, and the exercise of Métis harvesting rights. The ability to practice such activities was expressed by participants as an area of great importance. Many citizens flagged harvesting mobility as an issue that they think the MNO should actively look into and/or potentially pursue in order to ensure that Métis rightsholders can practice their way of life and land-based activities without undue restriction. A small number of participants noted that Métis rights are collective rights, and commented that as a result some decision-making should occur at the community level. During the virtual town halls, questions and concerns were also raised about whether or not the results of the Registry Review could impact current and future Métis harvesting rights.
(ii) Integrity and legitimacy of the MNO and the MNO Registry

Protecting the integrity of the MNO and the MNO Registry was stressed as a key priority for many citizens throughout the consultation process. For example, 68% of citizens who participated in the online feedback portal thought that the inclusion of persons within the MNO who are not verified section 35 rights-holders would undermine the MNO’s credibility as a Métis government and/or its ability to advance Métis rights and Métis self-government. As noted above, these topics also featured prominently in the virtual town hall discussions.

For a significant number of citizens, the MNO’s advancement of Métis rights was foundational to their participation in the MNO. For example, only 45% of respondents in the online feedback portal indicated that they would continue to support and be a part of the MNO if it continued to represent non-section 35 rights holders.

Participants also raised concerns about external legitimacy and the need to mend and maintain relationships with other Indigenous governments, including First Nations and other Métis governments, including the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Many citizens raised concerns related to the integrity of decision-making processes and suggested that citizens be required to have “Complete” files in order to vote in MNO elections and at AGAs. With respect to decision-making on the Registry Review in particular, participants explicitly recommended that the matter be referred to a province-wide vote (i.e., a plebiscite) and/or be brought to the MNO General Assembly for determination on next steps. Others raised concerns related to rights-related funding and suggested that access to certain MNO programs and services be limited to verified section 35 rightsholders. Citizens in the town halls and the online feedback portal also voiced concerns about individuals erroneously claiming to be Métis for the purposes of securing external jobs, positions, and promotions and encouraged the MNO to work with external parties to address this issue.44

(iii) Current and future citizenship requirements

The concept of Métis identity and consideration of the MNO’s current citizenship requirements featured prominently throughout the engagement process. Based on the feedback provided, the vast majority of participating citizens confirmed their support for the MNO’s current definition of “Métis,” which requires proof of Métis ancestry. Notably, 86% of citizens that submitted responses through the online feedback portal confirmed that they agree with the Métis ancestry requirement for MNO citizenship as outlined in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy.

While some citizens expressed an interest in developing a community acceptance process for determining MNO citizenship eligibility (see below), many citizens reiterated a strong interest in requiring that individuals meet the MNO’s current citizenship requirements as outlined in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy in order to be eligible for MNO citizenship.

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44 For a recent example of the media scrutiny such issues are receiving that occurred after the completion of the province-wide Registry Review citizen consultations, see: [https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6466873](https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6466873).
Citizens in the town halls and the online feedback portal highlighted the importance of the Registry Review engagement process to the MNO’s broader self-government process, including the development of a future Métis law on citizenship. These comments stressed the importance of starting with a baseline requirement that citizens be rightsholders, but indicated that further conversations related to adoption, community acceptance, and/or deregistration may be needed (see below).

(iv) Barriers to accessing genealogical information and requests for increased support

While many citizens noted the importance of providing genealogical documentation to obtain MNO citizenship, some stated that the MNO should provide further assistance to those having difficulties accessing information and documentation required to complete their file and/or should assist individuals with new citizenship applications. In particular, participants noted that people may not be able to access missing genealogical information for reasons and circumstances beyond their control and, as a result, may warrant special considerations. Examples provided included barriers experienced as a result of residential or day school attendance, the Sixties Scoop, adoption, and limitations in the colonial record. Others flagged that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused additional barriers to accessing required documentation and that the timelines for accessing and submitting required documentation should vary with the particular circumstances.

Support was expressed for providing additional assistance to citizens experiencing accessibility issues related to disability, literacy barriers, and technological issues through either the MNO Registry or another program. Some citizens suggested that the MNO check in with individuals who are currently conducting independent research to offer further assistance and to provide any updates regarding citizenship files and status by letter. Others expressed interest in a VMFL presentation to equip citizens and applicants with a better understanding of the Métis families and Métis Root Ancestors that make up the historic Métis communities in Ontario.

Participants requested clarity on whether people who have ancestors in western Quebec should qualify for MNO citizenship, whereas others requested further clarity on specific family lines (e.g., Chevrette-Souliere). Relatedly, more than half (61%) of citizens who submitted responses through the online feedback portal expressed an interest in the MNO publicly posting information on the various family lines that the MNO Registry has found do not meet the requirements for MNO citizenship and/or to be confirmed as a VMFL for the purposes of MNO harvesting rights.

During the consultation process, some citizens suggested that the MNO should work with external parties, such as the federal and provincial governments as well as churches, to acquire access to documentation on Métis people, families, and communities that these parties may have in their possession. Other suggestions raised by citizens to help address information barriers included: relying on oral histories in limited circumstances, developing a community acceptance process, considering participation and involvement in Métis culture (e.g., way of life, language), and potentially reviewing DNA reports.
(v) Métis adoption and Indian Act deregistration

Many citizens flagged the lack of clarity around adoption and MNO citizenship eligibility as an important issue and ongoing concern they would like to see be addressed by the MNO. In particular, various examples of children being adopted by Métis parents and raised as Métis children were shared during the virtual town halls as well as described in some of the long form responses submitted through the online feedback portal.

Of the citizens that referenced adoption, several voiced that it was important to them that children adopted into Métis families be entitled to MNO citizenship as members of the Métis family, whereas others expressed that a child adopted into a Métis family should not be entitled to pass MNO citizenship onto their children. Many citizens who flagged adoption as an issue during the Registry Review consultation process stressed the importance of recognizing the history of customary adoption within Métis communities, outside of the Canadian legal context.

Concerns were also raised about the “distinct from Aboriginal peoples” requirement for MNO citizenship. In particular, this concern was raised in relation to individuals who may have already registered or may be considering registering for Indian Act status for the purposes of accessing certain programs and services that are currently unavailable to the Métis, when there is currently no mechanism in place for deregistration. Although some citizens expressed a desire that consideration be given to the fact that some MNO citizens may also have close kinship connections with First Nations, there was overwhelming support that the MNO Registry should be a Métis-specific registry.

(vi) Requests for an appeal/reconsideration process for citizen registration decisions

The concept of an appeals/reconsideration process was raised throughout the citizen consultation process as a matter of procedural fairness for affected individuals. While a significant number of citizens expressed an interest in no more time being provided to citizens to complete their files (as noted below), a majority of responses received through the online feedback portal (61%) indicated that there should be an appeals or reconsideration process made available to citizens with “Incomplete” files. Potential options included the creation of a review panel or other appeals process where citizens could explain the reason(s) why they think their file should be deemed as “Complete.” By contrast, 19% of citizens that submitted responses through the online feedback portal expressed that there was no need for a reconsideration or appeal process.

(vii) Moving forward and responding to “Incomplete” files

During the virtual town hall sessions, citizens brought forward a number of potential options for discussion in regards to how, if at all, the MNO should move forward in responding to and implementing the results of the Registry Review. The initial options proposed by citizens included the: use of a grandfathered system, temporary “holding” or “archiving” citizenship files, and removal of citizenship files with or without the opportunity for reapplication. During the sessions, citizens also proposed various timelines for if/when citizens with “Incomplete” files should be
required to complete their files by (e.g., six months to a year), as well as recommended that the MNO provide clarity on any future process(es) to be implemented.

Similar options were proposed by citizens through the online feedback portal with a significant number of participating citizens indicating strong support for requiring all MNO citizens to meet the MNO’s current citizenship requirements. In particular, approximately 46% of citizens that responded through the online feedback portal (i.e., the option attracting the most support from participating citizens) provided comments in support of: removing citizens with “Incomplete” files from the MNO Registry, taking some form of action to support the MNO’s Métis rights and self-government agenda or strengthen the MNO Registry, and/or were supportive of the Registry Review process to date. This feedback is consistent with and further supported by the feedback received at the MNO Leadership Rendezvous where participants indicated strong support for the overall Registry Review process, as well as expressed a general desire for the MNO to take steps to address the status of “Incomplete” citizenship files in order to protect and maintain the integrity of the MNO Registry.

By contrast, only a minority of citizens that provided responses through the online feedback portal suggested that either: no action should be taken, some form of a secondary level of citizenship be created, or a grandfathering process could be implemented. In particular, approximately 12% of citizens that submitted responses through the online feedback portal provided comments in support of these positions, were critical of the Registry Review process to date, and/or suggested that the issue had been previously dealt with by the AGA. A few of these citizens raised concerns with removing citizens because of the potential effects on Métis culture given that some of these individuals may have been gifted Métis cultural knowledge and traditions.

Concerning timelines, the majority of citizens (64%) that submitted responses through the online feedback portal indicated that citizens should have between 0 months to 1 year to complete their files. Of this total, a significant number of citizens (36%) indicated that no more time should be provided to citizens to complete their files, whereas the remaining citizens indicated that no more than 6 months (14%) or one year (14%) should be provided. Analyzed another way, 50% of participating citizens stated that no more than 6 months should be provided for citizens to complete their files. With respect to citizenship files where the only barrier to completion is an unsigned Oath of Allegiance, some citizens recommend that all reasonable efforts be made to assist citizens in correcting the administrative error, but if affected citizens are unable or unwilling to comply with this requirement then their file should be “closed.”

A reoccurring sentiment across engagement platforms, and embedded in the responses received throughout the entire consultation process, was a need to handle the results of the Registry Review and potential next steps with care, consideration, and compassion for affected MNO citizens. In particular, many of the responses indicated a desire to honour and recognize certain individuals who may not meet the MNO’s current requirements for citizenship, but who have been instrumental in the MNO’s creation and evolution and/or may have adopted Métis traditions and a Métis way of life.
IV. What’s Next / Next Steps

This What We Heard Report completes the province-wide citizen consultation process provided for in PCMNO resolution PC210528-09.

Throughout the consultation process the MNO heard from many citizens that some form of proactive action is needed to address the issue of “Incomplete” files. In particular, many citizens shared their view that the MNO taking decisive action on the issue is vital to the integrity of the MNO Registry and the MNO’s ability to move forward on its Métis rights and self-government agenda, consistent with the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose. A variety of options were suggested, with citizenship removal for MNO citizens unable to complete their files within 6 months attracting the most support from participating MNO citizens. There was also overwhelming support for an appeals/reconsideration process.

In terms of formal next steps, the concrete suggestions offered by MNO citizens align closely with those provided by the PCMNO in resolution PC210528-09—namely, that the matter should be determined by MNO citizens through a province-wide vote and/or brought to the MNO General Assembly. In response to this feedback, the MNO is planning to conduct a second round of citizen engagement sessions based on the results of the What We Heard report to help guide and provide clarity on future decision-making steps (e.g., a province-wide plebiscite and special assembly).

Until such time that a formal decision is made on the broader issue, the MNO has begun work to address some of the above-noted concerns raised by MNO citizens during the consultation process on an interim basis (e.g., policies related to programs and services, third party verification of MNO citizenship status, and appointment eligibility45), as well as will continue to provide regular information and updates to MNO citizens on the Registry Review process (e.g., through the MNO website, the Registry Review Supplemental Report, ongoing support from the MNO Registry, etc.). The MNO is also considering whether and how best to address some of the other important, but tangential concerns raised by citizens during the Registry Review consultation process, including those related to: mobility of harvesting rights, adoption of children, and Indian Act deregistration. As previously noted, some of this work may help to inform the MNO’s ongoing and future self-government work.

The MNO thanks all citizens and leadership who have participated in and had their voices heard in the Registry Review consultation process to date as well as encourages all citizens to participate in the forthcoming second round of engagements. The MNO also encourages all citizens with “Incomplete” or “Missing Documentation” files to work with the MNO Registry to try and complete their file as soon as possible.

45 Note: As per the text of MNO Policy #2021-001: Eligibility for Direct Benefit Programs and Services and MNO Policy #2022-002: Verification of MNO Citizenship File Status to Other Governments and Third Party Institutions, these interim policies approved by the PCMNO will be brought to the AGA for formal consideration and potential adoption. The current draft of MNO Policy #2022-001: Eligibility for Internal and External MNO Appointments—which was approved in principle by the PCMNO for further engagement with MNO Community Councils—also contemplates coming to the AGA for formal consideration and adoption.
Appendix A: MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

We, the Métis are a people of the lands, which gave rise to our history and tradition and culture. We call those lands the Métis Homelands. The Homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario; cross the wide prairies, traverse the mountains into British Columbia and into the northern reaches of the Northwest Territories. They include the hills and valleys of the north-central American States.

These are our lands. They are Métis lands. They are the lands of our past which nurture us today and which we value as the precious foundation of our future. As Métis who live in the Homelands, we hold it to be a fundamental truth that we are one of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas. The Métis Nation continues today to be the embodiment of our past, the source of sustenance for our present while giving rise to our hopes and aspirations for the future.

We are a Nation, born of independence, and self-sufficiency whose teachings are founded on the values of honesty and truth. We are proud of our rich heritage. We are inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors. The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity, justice and the customary and written law of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace.

As Aboriginal people we hold sacred the rights of the individual and of the collective. We have respect for each other, for the land and for the animal and plant life that surrounds us. We are people who honour and respect the family, our elders who hold the key to the past, and our children, who are our future. Guided by our spiritual values we aspire to attain our highest potential.

Now Therefore We Declare As Follows:

We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada and as such our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right of self-determination and self-government; We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well-being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario;
- to establish democratic institutions based on our inherent right of self-government;
- to encourage the full participation of all Métis in the Métis Nation;
- to promote and foster community development;
- to re-establish land and resource bases;
- to develop prosperity and economic self-sufficiency within the Métis Nation;
- to provide care and support necessary to meet the fundamental needs of the citizens of the Métis Nation;
• to promote the improved health and wellness of the individual, the family and the whole Métis community;
• to establish effective means of communication for the Métis Nation;
• to encourage academic and skills development and to enable citizens of the Métis Nation to attain their educational aspirations;
• to promote the history, values, culture, languages and traditions of the Métis Nation and to create an awareness of our proud heritage;
• to promote Métis artistic and cultural achievement;
• to ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms and in so doing, act in a spirit of cooperation with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;
• to establish good relations and maintain our historic alliances with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals;
• to continue our affiliation with the Métis National Council for the representation of the interests of the Métis Nation in Ontario at the National and International levels;
• to gain the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people.
• to protect and preserve the land and waters within our homelands for future generations.
Appendix B: PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08

It was MOVED (Vice-Chair Cadeau) and SECONDED (Councilor Stenlund)

WHEREAS as the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) prepares to enter into further negotiations on Métis rights, self-government and outstanding Métis claims against the Crown, the credibility of the MNO Registry is essential; and

WHEREAS Section 4 of the MNO Bylaws states that “citizenship in the MNO shall be limited to individuals interested in furthering the objectives of the MNO and who are Métis within the definition adopted by the MNO” as set out in Section 4(a) of the MNO Bylaws and further explained in the MNO Registry Policy; and

WHEREAS, for greater certainty, the MNO definition of Métis includes all of the descendants of the seven historic regional rights-bearing Métis communities that have been identified by the MNO as well as citizens of the Métis Nation from western Canada who now live in Ontario; and

WHEREAS the MNO has recently released the results of its Ontario Métis Root Ancestors Project (Phase I), jointly identified seven historic regional rights-bearing Métis communities with Ontario, and completed a successful verification process of all MNO Harvester Card holders for the ongoing Independent Review;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provisional Council of the MNO direct the MNO administration to retain the consulting firm KnowHistory to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship cards. The review will provide the following information:

a. Files that are determined to meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship, including, an identification of whether these individuals ancestrally connect to one of the identified seven historic Métis communities in Ontario or the Métis Nation in western Canada (i.e., through Métis scrip, land grants, etc.) will be issued a new MNO citizenship card.

b. Files that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship will be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent to these MNO citizens and provide them with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the PCMNO further directs that this review begin with the elected leadership on the PCMNO and Community Councils and that following this review those that meet the MNO citizenship requirements be sent letters confirming their files are complete and that they be issued a new MNO citizenship card. Those that have outstanding documentation required in their files will be notified in writing and provided a fair and reasonable amount of time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.

RESOLVED (PC171022-08)
Appendix C: PCMNO Resolution PC210528-09

The following resolution was approved at the May 28, 2021 PCMNO meeting:

It was MOVED (Senator Poitras) and SECONDED (Executive Senator Gravelle)

WHEREAS the Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) recognizes that “the credibility of the MNO Registry is [an] essential [step]” as the MNO pursues “negotiations on Métis rights, self-government and outstanding Métis claims against the Crown”;

WHEREAS over the last 27 plus years, the MNO has worked consistently and transparently to develop, refine, and strengthen its registry system and processes and, as part of that history and evolution, has inherited certain legacy issues as a result of changes to the MNO citizenship definition over time, and the MNO Registry’s lack of capacity prior to 2004;

WHEREAS on October 22, 2017, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (“PCMNO”), passed Resolution PC171022-08, directing that:

i) “the MNO administration…retain the consulting firm Know History to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship cards” (the “MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process,” “RSRP,” or “Registry Review”);

ii) MNO citizens with “files that are determined to meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship” be issued new citizenship cards; and

iii) MNO citizens with “files that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship…be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent to these MNO citizens and with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry”;

AND WHEREAS over the last three years, the PCMNO and the MNO administration has provided regular updates on the progress of the Registry Review, including, memos to all citizens, updates at MNO Annual General Assemblies, articles in the Métis Voyageur newspaper, and maintaining a dedicated website with readily available materials that all citizens can access;

AND WHEREAS in late 2020, the PCMNO received a preliminary presentation from Know History in relation to the Registry Review and, on December 6, 2020, the PCMNO passed Resolution PC201206-03, directing MNO staff to develop “a communications plan for the public release of the Registry Report,” as well as “a plan to engage citizens on the overall results of the Registry Report, which includes considering the matter of incomplete files;”

AND WHEREAS on January 31, 2021, Know History completed its independent review of the MNO’s nearly 24,000 citizenship files and compiled those results in the May 2021 report titled,

AND WHEREAS the PCMNO wants to ensure that all MNO citizens have an opportunity to review, ask question, discuss, and understand the Final Report, as well as provide direction on the MNO's potential next steps in relation to addressing the issues that emerge for the MNO from the Final Report;

AND WHEREAS the PCMNO also wants MNO citizens to be aware of political and legal developments relating to Métis rights and the MNO Registry, including, national implications, lawsuits the MNO has successfully defended against, where individuals have challenged the MNO’s refusal of not granting them citizenship, as well as other litigation being advanced against the MNO that may affect it in the future;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the PCMNO approves of the following Next Steps and Engagement Plan (the “Registry Review Comms Plan”) that were presented and discussed at the PCMNO meeting of May 28, 2021:

1. Develop and Release Communication Tools on the Registry Review. The MNO’s administration be directed to develop and release the following materials on or about June 15, 2021:
   a) The Final Report detailing the context, methodology, and results of the Registry Review, including an Executive Summary;
   b) An MNO Registry Review covering report, providing an overview of the history and evolution of the MNO Registry and citizenship requirements, and summary of the key findings from the Final Report;
   c) A press release, communicating the results of the Final Report, the details of the Next Steps and Engagement Plan, and how citizens can participate in next steps;
   d) An updated Fact Sheet, amending the existing Registry Review fact sheet publicly posted on the MNO’s website;
   e) Talking points, summarizing for MNO leadership the: key findings, context, next steps, chronology, etc. related to the Registry Review process and Final Report;
   f) A video (produced by SandBay Entertainment Inc.), explaining the Registry Review context, process, and outcomes; and
   g) Social media outreach, to inform and engage with citizens on the Registry Review Comms Plan.

2. Undertake province-wide consultation with MNO citizens on the Final Report. Over the summer of 2021, the MNO will host a series of virtual Town Hall meetings open to all MNO citizens, including an MNO Leadership Town Hall, an MNO Citizen Town Hall, as
well as other local and regional online meeting sessions depending on interest and requests following the release of the Final Report.

3. **Develop a “What We Heard” Report.** Based on the province-wide consultation, a “What We Heard” report will be prepared. The report will be brought back to PCMNO for review and consideration and will ultimately be publicly released.

4. **Province-wide vote in Fall/Winter 2021 and/or Special Assembly on MNO citizenship.** Given the significance of the issues engaged by the Registry Review and that it has been the MNO’s longstanding custom and tradition to hold province-wide elections as well as allow every MNO citizen to vote at MNO Annual General Assemblies, the MNO administration be directed to look at options for conducting a province-wide vote in Fall/Winter of 2021 where all MNO citizens would have an opportunity to vote on next steps from the Final Report, including, developing potential question(s) that could be posed to all MNO citizens and/or the passage of a potential law or policy that could be adopted to guide further decision-making and/or amend the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy. In addition, the MNO administration be directed to identify potential options for a Special Assembly on MNO citizenship to be held in late Fall/Winter 2021 or early 2022, if developments related to COVID-19 make the prospect of such a meeting viable from a public health and safety perspective.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (PC210528-09)**
Appendix D: MNO Registry Review Online Feedback Portal (Survey) Results

Question 2: Have you read the MNO’s Statement of Prime Purpose?

- Yes: 97%
- No: 1%
- I prefer not to answer: 2%

Question 3: Do you believe in and support Métis rights?

- Yes: 99%
- No: 1%
- I prefer not to answer: 0%
Question 4: The MNO’s Statement of Prime Purpose states: “We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada and as such our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.” The Statement of Prime Purpose furthers that: “We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right of self-determination and self-government…” and specifies that one of the MNO’s aims and objectives includes: “to ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms.” Do you support this part of the MNO’s Statement of Prime Purpose, which clearly prioritizes the advancement of Métis rights and Métis self-government?
**Question 5:** In *R v Powley*, 2003 SCC 43 and subsequent decisions, the Courts have been clear that Métis section 35 rights are communal in nature (i.e., they belong to regional rights-bearing Métis communities) and that descendants can only exercise those section 35 rights by virtue of having an ancestral connection to a historic Métis community. This requirement for Métis ancestry is reflected in the MNO Bylaws and the MNO Registry Policy. In particular, the MNO Bylaws define Métis as “a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.” The MNO Registry Policy, which was formally adopted by the Annual General Assembly in 2014, further requires individuals applying for MNO citizenship to provide, among other things, documented proof of their Métis ancestry (as opposed to mixed Indigenous ancestry or no documented proof at all). Do you agree with this Métis ancestry requirement for MNO citizenship?

![Pie chart showing responses to Question 5](image)

**Question 6:** Do you think the inclusion of non-section 35 rights holders within the MNO undermines the MNO’s credibility as a Métis government and/or its ability to advance Métis rights and Métis self-government?

![Pie chart showing responses to Question 6](image)
Question 7: Would you continue to support and be a part of the MNO if it continued to represent non-section 35 rights holders?

![Pie chart showing responses]

Question 8: Another one of the aims and objectives of the MNO, as outlined in the Statement of Prime Purpose, is “to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario.” Over the course of many years, the MNO has conducted extensive research to identify Métis Root Ancestors that make up the historic Métis communities in Ontario, and has since made information on these Métis Root Ancestors publicly available through the over 112 Verified Métis Family Line Reports currently posted on the MNO’s website. In the course of this research, the MNO has also identified a few family lines that do not meet the MNO’s requirements for citizenship and/or harvesting. Should the MNO publicly post information on these family lines, explaining why they have not been approved as including a Métis Root Ancestor?

![Pie chart showing responses]
Question 9: PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08, which initiated the Registry Review in October 2017, provided that “[f]iles that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship will be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent to these MNO citizens and provide them with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.”

As of July 2019, all MNO citizens with “Incomplete” files and up to date contact information have been provided with a letter from the MNO Registry confirming their file status, as well as what necessary documents are missing to complete their file. The letter also provides the MNO Registry’s contact information for further follow-up and questions.

How much additional time do you think MNO citizens should be given to complete their files?

- No more time should be provided; MNO citizens have already had a “fair and reasonable” amount of time to complete their citizenship files as per PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08
- 6 months
- 1 year
- More than 1 year
- Not sure
- I prefer not to answer
**Question 11: Do you think a reconsideration or appeal process should be made available to MNO citizens with “incomplete” files?**

**The following two questions allowed survey respondents to enter comments directly into the survey. Many of the comments received were interconnected / interrelated and, as a result, their results are summarized together below.**

**Question 10: The MNO has not yet determined what, if anything, to do with the results of the Registry Review, but has received preliminary feedback on potential next steps from MNO citizens that participated in the Registry Review consultation sessions. To ensure all citizens have input, the MNO would like to hear from you about what, if anything, you would like to see the MNO do if MNO citizens do not complete their citizenship files by the timeline you selected for question 9.**

**Question 12: Please provide any additional comments or feedback that you would like the MNO to consider as it considers next steps in relation to the Registry Review.**

**Summary of Responses**

A large portion (over 200 or 46%) of the responses to these questions suggested support for a Métis rights based registry. Feedback in line with this finding included:

a) removal of citizens with “Incomplete” files;
b) support for MNO’s current path of a right-based registry and/or strong registry;
c) discussion about the risks of not moving forward with some type of action;
d) saying that some type of action is needed for self-government;
e) generally supportive of the process so far; and/or
f) any other comments suggesting taking action on citizens with “Incomplete” files.

A small portion (under 60 or 13%) of response to these questions were supportive of maintaining the status quo in the MNO Registry. Feedback to this effect included:
a) disagreement with the removal of citizens;
b) support for keeping people with “Incomplete” files in the registry;
c) critics of MNO’s process around the Registry Review so far;
d) saying that this was dealt with a previous AGA;
e) saying that this should just be left alone;
f) general criticism about the survey and/or process so far; and/or
g) any other comments suggesting not taking action on citizens with “Incomplete” files.

A large portion (over 190 or 41%) of responses to these questions suggested uncertainty/ambiguity on how to proceed and/or provided no response to these questions.