

UNDERSTANDING THE MNO REGISTRY & REGISTRY REVIEW

The Métis Nation of Ontario

Prior to Canada becoming Canada, distinct Métis communities emerged in various regions of the historic North-West—including surrounding the Upper Great Lakes and along waterways and fur trade routes of what is now Ontario. These Métis communities developed their own shared customs, traditions, and collective identities rooted in their special Aboriginal relationship to the land, and a distinctive culture and way of life.

In 1993, the MNO was established as a Métis-specific government with the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Prime Purpose, including to:

- ∞ “research, publish, and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario”;
- ∞ “establish democratic institutions based on the inherent right of self-government”;
- ∞ “ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and treaty rights and freedoms...”;

Over the last 30 years, the MNO’s citizenship criteria has changed in furtherance of these aims and objectives, based on the will and direction of its citizens, and consistent with the Supreme Court of Canada’s (SCC) direction in *R v Powley (Powley)* regarding the need for “objectively verifiable registration systems for identifying rights holders.

The Powley Case

14 judges across 4 levels of court, including the SCC, agreed that the Powleys have s. 35 Métis harvesting rights.

Ultimately, the SCC agreed with the Powleys, the MNO, and the Métis National Council (MNC) that identification of members of Métis communities is a decision to be made by those communities based on the following guidelines:

- ∞ Self-identification as Métis
- ∞ An ancestral connection to a historic Métis community
- ∞ Community acceptance

The SCC found the Powleys have s. 35 rights by virtue of their ancestral connection to the Sault Ste. Marie Métis community in the Upper Great Lakes region of Ontario, not because they or other Métis come from the Red River. *Powley* remains the first and only SCC decision to affirm Métis rights protected by s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.



The MNO Registry and the National Definition of Métis

In 2002—before of the release of the SCC’s decision in *Powley*—the MNO supported the MNC’s adoption of a national definition for citizenship within the Métis Nation (National Definition).

Clearly, it would have been absurd for the National Definition to exclude the Powleys or Métis communities in the Upper Great Lakes, whose rights were simultaneously being considered by the courts and explicitly advanced and supported by the MNO and the MNC (as the national representative of the Métis Nation).

In 2004, the MNO adopted a new definition of “Métis” and process for the registration of its citizens that was consistent with the National Definition and *Powley* criteria.

National Definition:

“Métis means 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.”

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

The Veracity and Legitimacy of the MNO Registry

The MNO Registry has undergone multiple independent reviews that have all confirmed its reliability as a system for identifying Métis rights-holders.

Like the majority of other recognized Métis Governments, the MNO undertook a Registry Review process between 2017 to 2023 that consisted of a third-party independent review of every single MNO citizenship file to ensure all MNO citizens are verified Métis rights-holders (i.e., they ancestrally connect to the historic Métis communities in Ontario or to other Métis communities from what is now Western Canada).

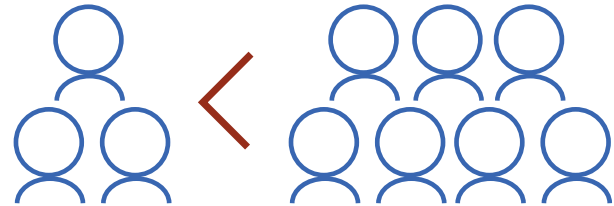
The Registry Review concluded that the vast majority of MNO citizens have “complete” files, meaning they satisfy all the MNO’s current requirements for citizenship and are verified Métis rights-holders. Approximately 6,000 citizens had “incomplete” or missing documentation files.

Following the clear democratic will of citizens provided through an historic province-wide plebiscite vote, the MNO amended its governance documents to allow for the removal of citizens with “incomplete” files. There is also an appeals process that citizens subject to removal can pursue if they so choose.

Now that the MNO’s governance documents allow for the removal of citizens whose files do not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship, MNO’s Registry is able to correct errors which may not have been previously identified when initial determinations about a files completeness were made. Ongoing assessment of genealogical and historical records is a hallmark of a credible registry system.

The MNO’s Citizenship Growth & Current Citizenship Populations

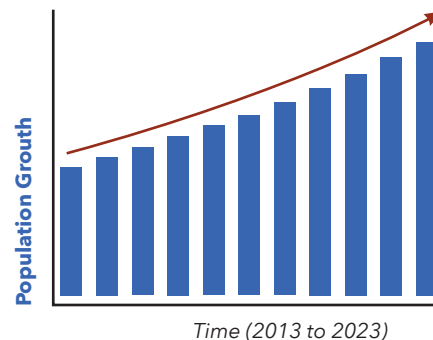
While some self-proclaimed “experts” and organizations have been suggesting that the MNO’s citizenship is growing “exponentially” and “out of control”, these comments are simply untrue and divorced from facts.



The MNO’s population growth is actually less than other Métis governments over the last decade.

Here are the facts:

- ∞ These increases took place while significant citizenship backlogs were finally being addressed, so this growth may not be maintained.



On average, over the last decade (i.e., 2013 to 2023), the MNO only registered approximately 1,850 new citizens each year, representing a 7% growth year over year

- ∞ Based on the recent MNO province-wide vote, the MNO has also amended its constituting documents to ensure that it only represents verified Métis rights-holders.

FALL 2017

MNO initiates the Registry Review

WINTER 2023

A clear majority (i.e., 71% or 5,898 MNO citizens) of the 8,270 MNO citizens that voted in the plebiscite, vote to remove citizens with “incomplete” files

SUMMER 2023

MNO amends its governance documents to allow for removal; removal notices are issued

SPRING 2024

Individuals with “incomplete” files were removed from MNO’s registry