

This is a time of learning, questioning, listening, and considering. It is a time to understand what is in the Final Agreement, and what it means for our future. It is a time to think carefully and decide—as a unified Lheidli T'enneh Nation—the best path forward for our future.

Benefits and the limitations of the Final Agreement

The Final Agreement offers us a clear path for our future, defines our land ownership and rights, allows us to govern ourselves, protects our culture, and provides us ways to grow in the future. But it also has limitations.

Benefits

- The Final Agreement provides certainty so we can move forward to make plans for the future now without waiting to explore other options that could take many more years.
- We will own our lands.
- We will have access to natural resources like timber, oil, and gas on lands we own
- We will have the right to hunt, fish, and harvest throughout the harvest area.
- We will have a stable source of funding to deliver services and programs.
- Our own government will have the authority to make decisions for the benefit of our people.

Limitations

- We will agree to share our traditional territory as we do now. We retain our rights to hunt and harvest, but we do not own all of this land.
- Although we will have input in decisions, we will need to abide by rules made by other governments in order to manage fish and wildlife.
- Over time, members will lose their tax exemption.
- The Final Agreement will be very hard, if not impossible, to change.

It is up to us to weigh the benefits and limitations and use our voice to make our choice for our future.



For more than 10 years, our people negotiated in good faith with the governments of British Columbia and Canada to reach this Agreement. The negotiations were often very difficult, but they were thorough. And at the end of negotiations, an agreement was reached that our negotiators and our leadership felt was the best Agreement for our people.

As in any negotiation, the Final Agreement contains many benefits for the Lheidli T'enneh, but it also includes some compromises.

What are the benefits of the Final Agreement?

The Agreement defines rights for the Lheidli T'enneh in a number of areas including land ownership, governance, finance and harvesting, which will allow us to make decisions and move forward.

We will have clear ownership of Lheidli T'enneh lands.

Lheidli T'enneh will own 4,330 hectares of land, including land in and around Prince George and our historic Indian Reserves. We will also have the ability to purchase more land to add to our landholdings.

We will retain rights and benefits related to the land, wildlife and fish throughout the harvest area.

The Lheidli T'enneh people will have clearly defined rights to hunt, fish and gather throughout large traditional harvest areas, covering 4.5 million hectares, even though we will not own this land outright. The Lheidli T'enneh government will also receive funds to help us develop our own fisheries management programs.

We will have defined and protected access to natural resources like timber, oil and gas.

We will have clear rights to harvest natural resources on land we own. We will own the timber on our land. We will also own any underground resources like minerals, oil or gas on land we own. We can harvest these resources ourselves, or others can pay us to harvest or extract the resources.

Stable funding will exist to operate a Lheidli T'enneh government and to deliver services and programs.

We will no longer depend on the federal government for a patchwork of annual and project funding as we do today. Our new government will receive a cash settlement of more than \$18 million, more than \$12 million to help implement the Agreement, and stable funding of more than \$1.8-million annually to provide programs and services. We will receive a share of the wealth from the resources of British Columbia and we will also be able to develop our own sources of revenue through taxes and economic development.

Our Lheidli T'enneh government will have authority to make decisions for the benefit of our people.

The Lheidli T'enneh government will operate under its own constitution, or set of rules that must be approved by our people. Our government will be democratic and accountable to the people. It will have the authority to govern our lands and to provide opportunities for our future.



What are the limitations of the Final Agreement?

The Final Agreement has limitations. For example:

We will still share a large part of our traditional territory. We retain our rights to hunt and harvest, but we will not own this land outright.

Much of our traditional territory will continue to be Crown Land and the governments of Canada and British Columbia will have a role in setting the rules that apply on those lands. However, those governments will have to consult with us on any decision that could affect our treaty rights.

Over time, members will lose their tax exemption under the *Indian Act*.

Over the next 8 to 12 years, we will lose our *Indian Act* tax exemptions. However, the income and sales taxes Lheidli T'enneh citizens pay will go to the Lheidli T'enneh government rather than to the Government of Canada. These taxes will fund Lheidli T'enneh programs and services, so our tax money will be returned to work for us through our government.

Indian Act tax exemptions currently apply only to income earned and purchases made on reserve. Any income, investments and purchases made off-reserve by members are already taxed.

We will not have complete control over fishing and hunting.

Although we will continue to have hunting and fishing rights and more input on management decisions, the governments of British Columbia and Canada will remain involved in the conservation and management of wildlife and fish on our lands and within our harvest area.

The Agreement will be very hard to change.

The Agreement is legally binding and can only be changed if all three — the Lheidli T'enneh and the governments of British Columbia and Canada — agree. Because modern treaties are very complex, there may be unforeseen issues that will require resolution if they become problems in the future. The Final Agreement also contains formal dispute resolution procedures that will help if this occurs.

Lheidli T'enneh will still be involved with federal and provincial bureaucracies.

The Final Agreement provides for a fuller and more complex involvement with the federal and provincial governments which will in turn involve more interaction with bureaucracies that may have other priorities and agendas. The trade-off is that the Final Agreement is binding, has constitutional force, and provides a more equal balance of power and enforceability than exists now.





your Voice. your Choice.

our Future

Whatever the outcome, this vote will be historic. As we walk this path, as we talk about and consider our future together, our people will become stronger. We will hold the conversations about our choices in an open and respectful way, where all thoughts and opinions will be valued; where we respect and learn from each other; where we decide our future together.

We are the Lheidli T'enneh.
We have many voices
But we are one proud people.
We will move forward together
To make a better future.

