

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

# Canadians Divided on Australia-style Apology to Aboriginal Population

*The vast majority thinks Ottawa should work harder to eradicate poverty in aboriginal communities*

[TORONTO – Mar. 5, 2008] – Adults in Canada are split on whether Ottawa should follow the lead of the Australian government and offer an apology to the country's indigenous peoples for past wrongdoings, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

Last month, Australian Prime Minister and leader of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) Kevin Rudd became the first head of government to formally apologize to Australia's Aboriginal population for the "laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss" upon them.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 42 per cent of respondents think the Canadian government should offer a similar apology to the country's Aboriginal population, while 39 per cent disagree.

Although respondents are divided on whether an official apology from Ottawa is required, the vast majority of Canadians agrees that more should be done to help Aboriginal communities. Seventy per cent of respondents want the federal government to do more to deal with poverty in Aboriginal communities, and 72 per cent want to speed-up existing Aboriginal land claims disputes

In an Angus Reid Strategies poll conducted in July 2007, 64 per cent of respondents urged the government to do more to alleviate poverty in Aboriginal communities, and 71 per cent wanted a prompt solution to pending land claims disputes.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- » **42% want Ottawa to imitate Australia's historical apology to natives for past wrongdoings; 39% disagree**
- » **At least 70% say federal government should do more to reduce poverty in Aboriginal reserves and speed up land-claims disputes**
- » **68% think Canada should help its Aboriginal population before offering development aid to other countries**
- » **Respondents divided on whether Canada was right to vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From February 19 to February 21, 2008, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,085 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.0 %, 19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

Just like in 2007, respondents are still pondering whether the government was right to vote against the United Nations (UN) Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in June 2006. Last year, 29 per cent of respondents thought Canada was correct in voting against the Declaration, while 29 per cent thought it should have endorsed it.

In the latest survey, 32 per cent of respondents think Canada was right to vote against the declaration, because it is inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and could prevent military activities on aboriginal land. Conversely, 30 per cent of respondents think Canada was wrong to vote against the declaration, because the government has opposed a major international effort to promote human rights and fight discrimination. Almost two-in-five respondents (37%) remain undecided about this topic.

Canada offers billions of dollars in aid to several countries around the globe. Still, two-thirds of respondents (68%) think the federal government should help its Aboriginal population before allocating money and resources to other countries.

Albertans hold very different views on Aboriginal affairs from the rest of the country. Only 27 per cent of respondents in Alberta think the federal government should offer a formal apology to Canada's Aboriginal peoples, compared to at least 39 per cent of respondents in other provinces. Less than half of Albertans (47%) urge the government to do more to curb poverty in Aboriginal communities, while the number is markedly higher elsewhere.

Albertans are also more likely to dismiss the necessity to speed up land claims disputes (37%), and to believe that Canada was right to reject the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (50%).

Related releases:

07.25.07

Angus Reid Poll: International recognition of native rights - what do Canadians think?

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=90>

### Aboriginal Affairs

As you may know, the Government of Australia offered an official apology to the country's Aboriginal population for the "laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss" on Australia's Aboriginal peoples. Do you think the Canadian government should offer a similar apology to Canada's Aboriginal population?

		Region					
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
<b>Yes</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>27%</b>

### Aboriginal Affairs

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

The federal government should do more to deal with poverty in Aboriginal communities

		Region					
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
<b>Agree</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>

**Aboriginals in Canada**

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

The federal government should speed-up existing Aboriginal land claims disputes

		Region					
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Agree	72%	68%	58%	65%	80%	75%	63%
Disagree	22%	28%	37%	27%	15%	21%	25%
Not sure	6%	4%	5%	8%	5%	4%	12%

**Aboriginals in Canada**

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Canada should help its Aboriginal population before offering development aid to other countries

		Region					
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Agree	68%	68%	50%	74%	71%	67%	74%
Disagree	29%	31%	47%	23%	25%	30%	20%
Not sure	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%

### Aboriginals in Canada

As you may know, Canada and Russia were the only members of the United Nations Human Rights Council to vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—which provides minimum international standards for the protection of the dignity, well being and survival of the world's Indigenous Peoples—in June 2006. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
<b>Canada was right to vote against the declaration, which is inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and could prevent military activities on aboriginal land</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Canada was wrong to vote against the declaration, because the government has opposed a major international effort to promote human rights and fight discrimination</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>38%</b>

*Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.*

*Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.*

*Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of the 2007 provincial elections in:*

*Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>  
Manitoba: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=56>  
Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>  
Saskatchewan: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=138>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF%20WHITE%20PAPER.pdf>*

**- 30 -**

**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
[www.angusreidstrategies.com](http://www.angusreidstrategies.com)**